THE FANTASTIC FOUR®

YANCY STREET
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MARVEL MASTERWORKS®

BY STAN LEE & JACK KIRBY

MARVEL

The World's Greatest Comic Magazine!
Fantastic Four
21 Dec.
Fighting each other, under the sinister spell of "The Hate-Monger!"
(Don't dare reveal his true identity after reading this tale!)
This issue's great guest star... "Sgt. Fury" more exciting than ever!!
A book-length bombshell!

The World's Greatest Comic Magazine!
Fantastic Four
22 Jan.
Celebrate with us the return of one of the first super-villains ever faced by the F.F. The Mole Man is presented now in the new, much-improved Marvel manner!
Proudest achievement of the mighty Marvel Group!
That's it, Thing! Come just a little further!
Hold it! That wall is radio-active! If you touch it, you're doomed!
In a mysterious dungeon, far below Earth's surface, a fearful fate awaits the Fantastic Four!

The World's Greatest Comic Magazine!
Fantastic Four
23 Feb.
"The Master Plan of Doctor Doom!"
Another mighty milestone in the Marvel age of comics!

The World's Greatest Comic Magazine!
Fantastic Four
24 Mar.
Never have you read a tale... never have you seen a creature remotely like...
The Infant Terrible!
A book-length classic of the incredible!
Surprise follows spectacular surprise in the marvelous Marvel manner!

The World's Greatest Comic Magazine!
Fantastic Four
25 Apr.
This is the big one! "The Incredible Hulk versus The Thing!"
A Marvel super-spectacular!
Page after page of pulse-pounding thrills!
Bringing the Marvel age of comics to a lofty new pinnacle of greatness!
The battle of the century!

The World's Greatest Comic Magazine!
Fantastic Four
26 May
"The Avengers Take Over!"
Don't miss the great conclusion of the epic battle between the Thing and the Hulk!
Featuring a galaxy of the world's most thrilling guest stars!

The World's Greatest Comic Magazine!
Fantastic Four
27 June
With special guest star: the sensational Dr. Strange
"The Search for the Sub-Mariner!"

The World's Greatest Comic Magazine!
Fantastic Four
28 July
Guest stars galore! As the F.F. tangles with the X-Men!
The Mad Thinker! The Puppet Master! The awesome Android!

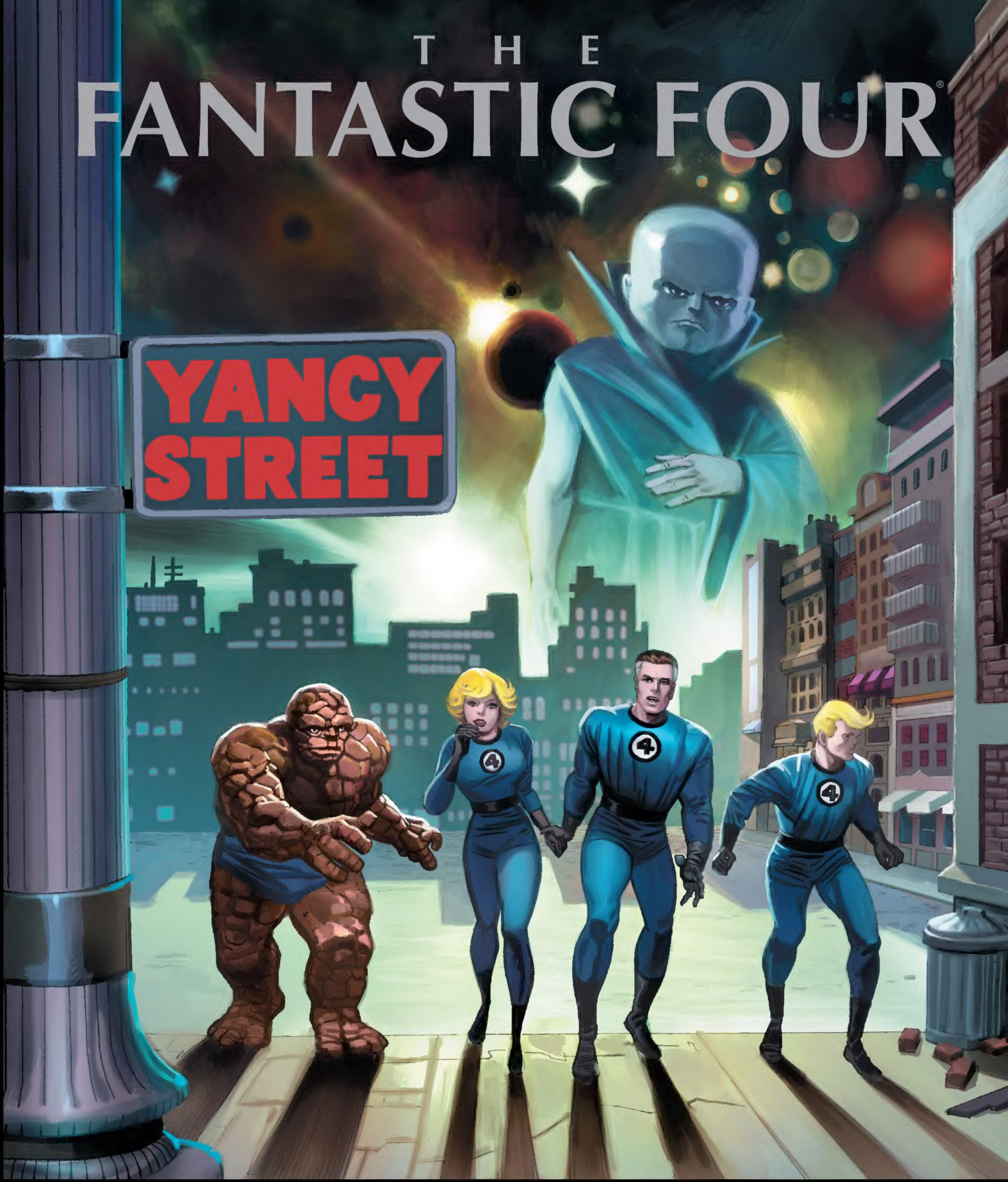
The World's Greatest Comic Magazine!
Fantastic Four
30 Sept.
Will the mysterious Diablo finally be the villain who succeeds in breaking up the fabulous F.F.??!
See bashful Benjamin transformed into a startling, truly different Thing!

THE MARVEL MASTERWORKS PROUDLY PRESENT THE WORLD'S MOST FAMOUS COMICS AND SUPER HEROES FROM THEIR VERY BEGINNINGS IN A SERIES OF PAINSTAKINGLY RESTORED ARCHIVAL VOLUMES.

MARVEL

COLLECTING COLLECTING *THE FANTASTIC FOUR* #21-30

THE FANTASTIC FOUR®


YANCY STREET

MARVEL MASTERWORKS®

BY STAN LEE & JACK KIRBY

MARVEL

THE WORLD'S GREATEST COMIC MAGAZINE!

APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY

IND.

Fantastic Four,

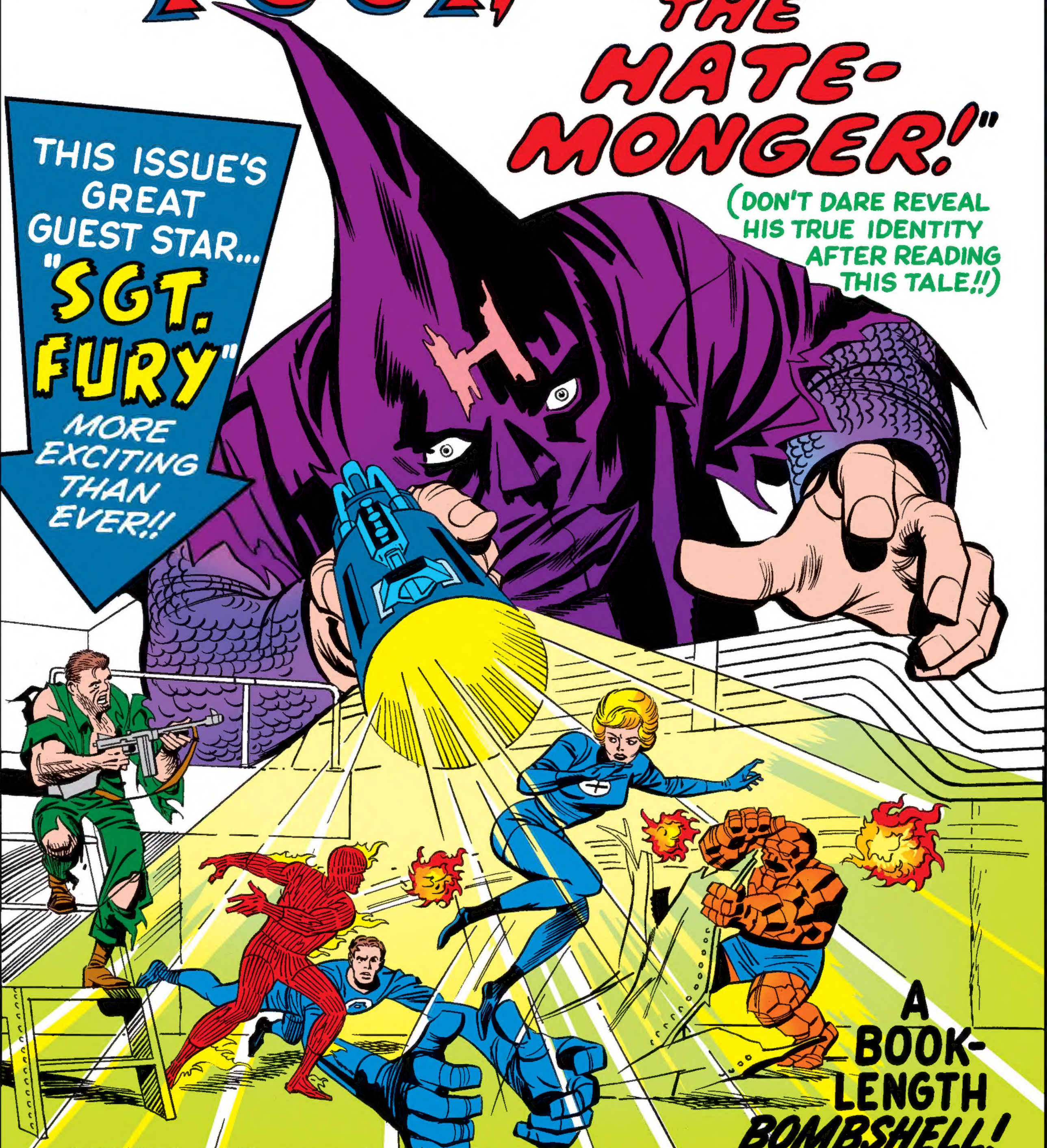
21
DEC.

MARVEL COMICS GROUP 12¢

FIGHTING EACH OTHER, UNDER THE SINISTER SPELL OF

"THE HATE-MONGER!"

(DON'T DARE REVEAL HIS TRUE IDENTITY AFTER READING THIS TALE!!)


THIS ISSUE'S GREAT GUEST STAR... "SGT. FURY" MORE EXCITING THAN EVER!!
A BOOK-LENGTH BOMBSHELL!

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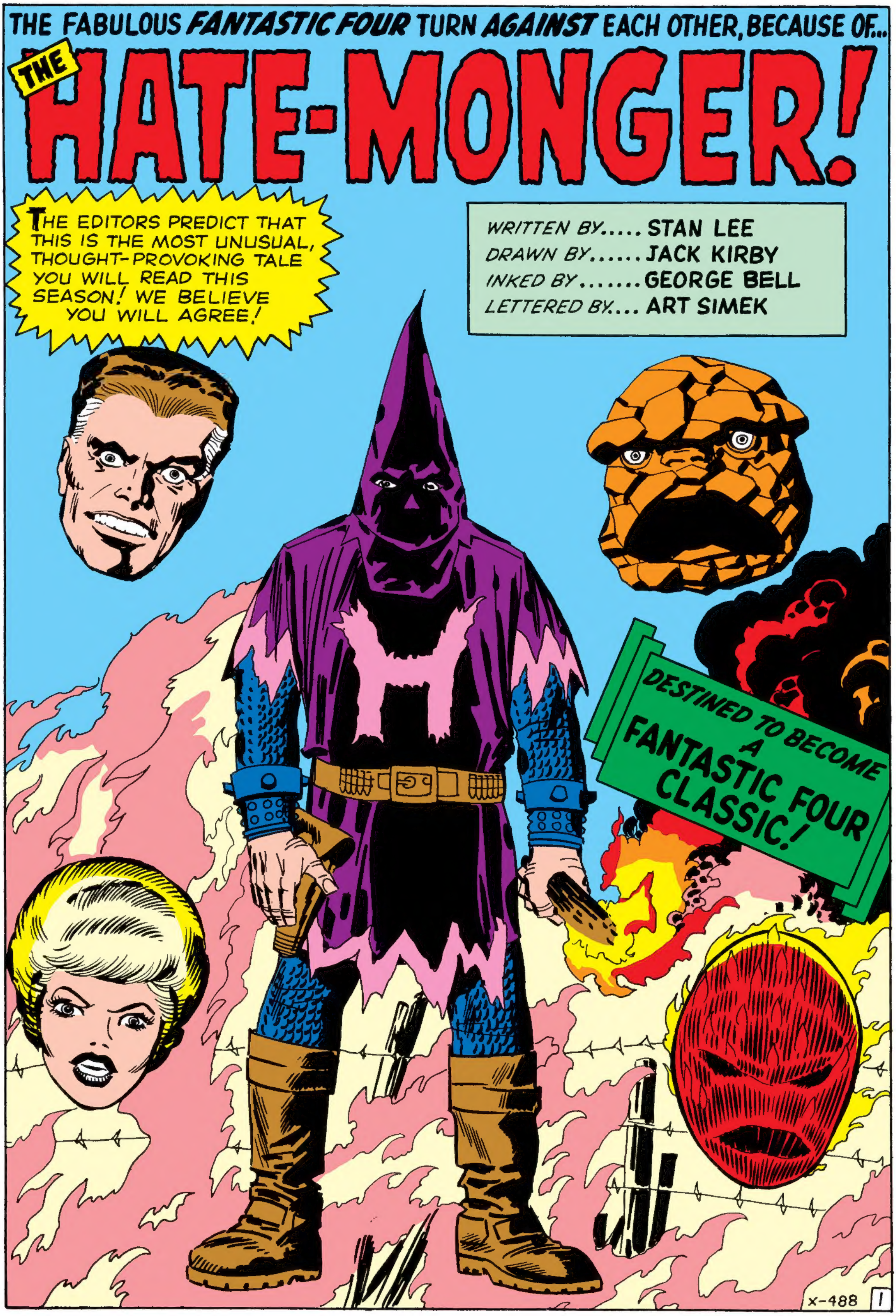
THE FABULOUS FANTASTIC FOUR TURN AGAINST EACH OTHER, BECAUSE OF...
THE HATE-MONGER!
THE EDITORS PREDICT THAT THIS IS THE MOST UNUSUAL, THOUGHT-PROVOKING TALE YOU WILL READ THIS SEASON! WE BELIEVE YOU WILL AGREE!
WRITTEN BY..... STAN LEE
DRAWN BY...... JACK KIRBY
INKED BY....... GEORGE BELL
LETTERED BY.... ART SIMEK
DESTINED TO BECOME A FANTASTIC FOUR CLASSIC!
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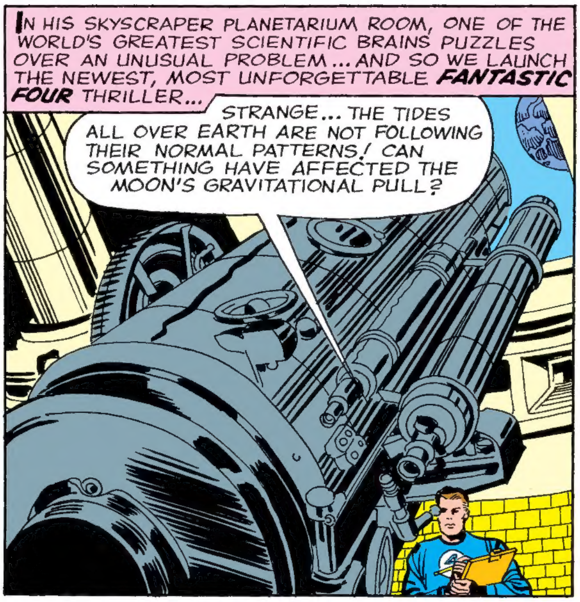
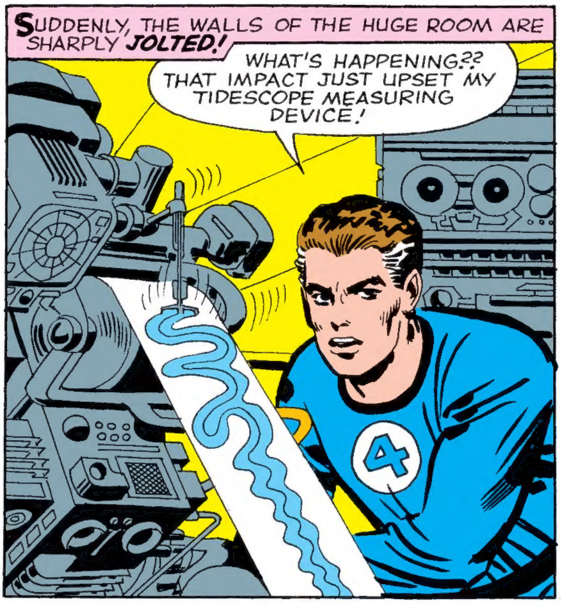
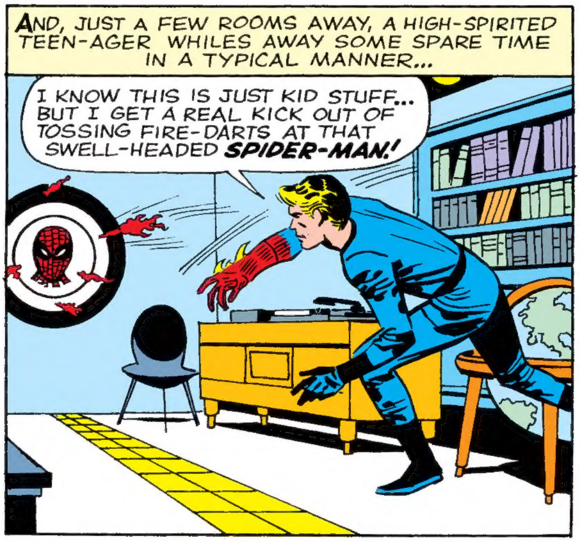
IN HIS SKYSCRAPER PLANETARIUM ROOM, ONE OF THE WORLD'S GREATEST SCIENTIFIC BRAINS PUZZLES OVER AN UNUSUAL PROBLEM... AND SO WE LAUNCH THE NEWEST, MOST UNFORGETTABLE **FANTASTIC FOUR** THRILLER...


STRANGE... THE TIDES ALL OVER EARTH ARE NOT FOLLOWING THEIR NORMAL PATTERNS! CAN SOMETHING HAVE AFFECTED THE MOON'S GRAVITATIONAL PULL?

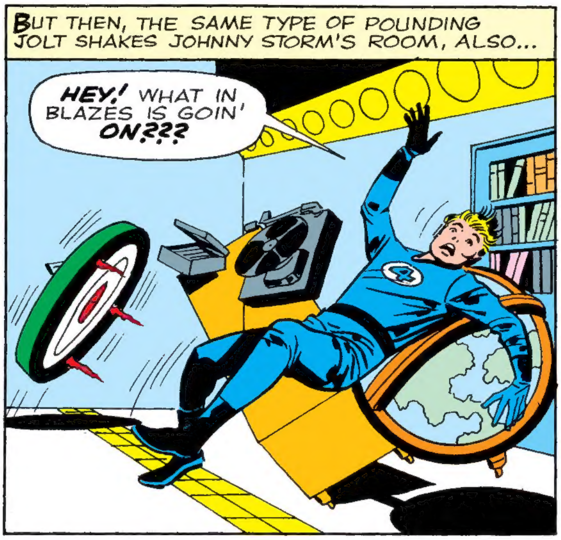
SUDDENLY, THE WALLS OF THE HUGE ROOM ARE SHARPLY **JOLTED!**


WHAT'S HAPPENING?? THAT IMPACT JUST UPSET MY TIDESCOPE MEASURING DEVICE!

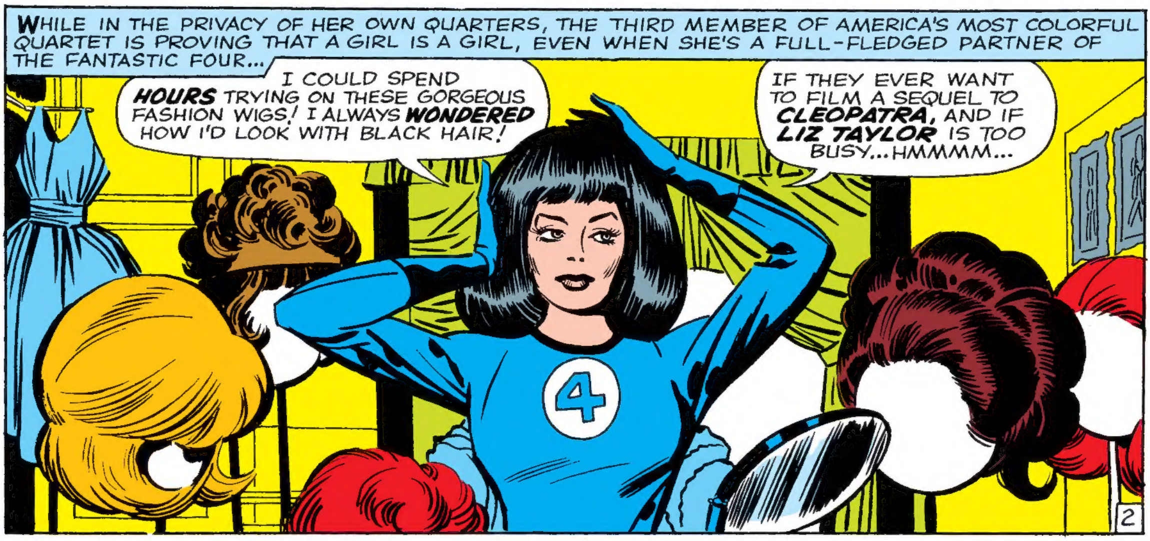
AND, JUST A FEW ROOMS AWAY, A HIGH-SPIRITED TEEN-AGER WHILES AWAY SOME SPARE TIME IN A TYPICAL MANNER...

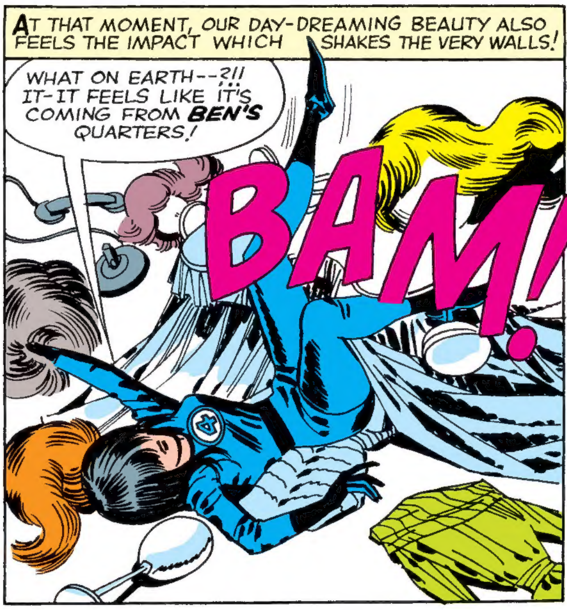

I KNOW THIS IS JUST KID STUFF... BUT I GET A REAL KICK OUT OF TOSSING FIRE-DARTS AT THAT SWELL-HEADED **SPIDER-MAN!**

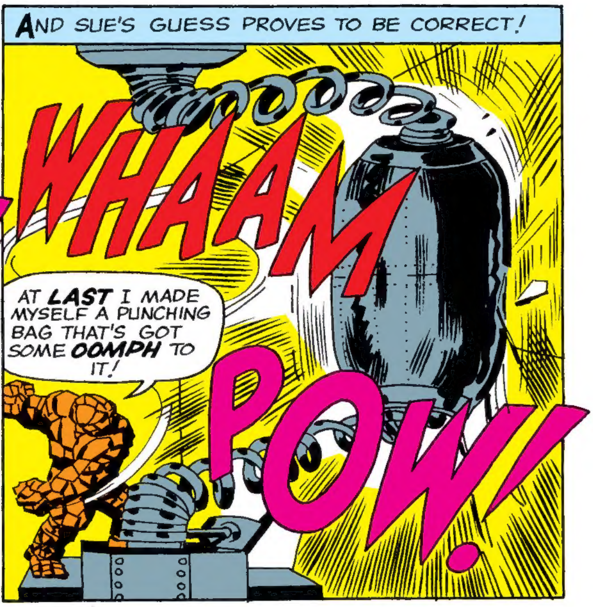
BUT THEN, THE SAME TYPE OF POUNDING JOLT SHAKES JOHNNY STORM'S ROOM, ALSO...

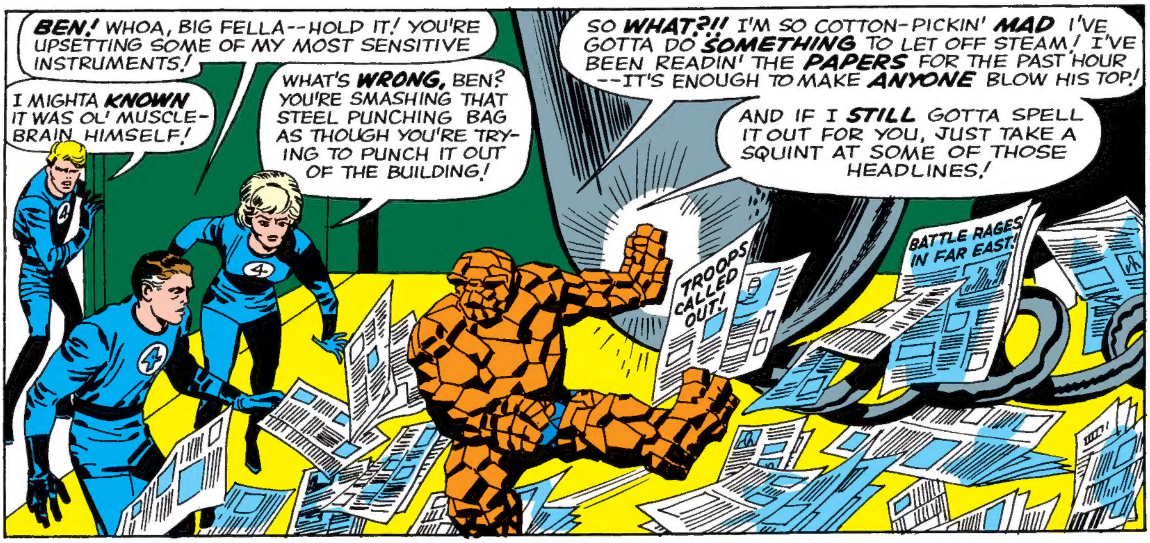

HEY! WHAT IN BLAZES IS GOIN' **ON???**

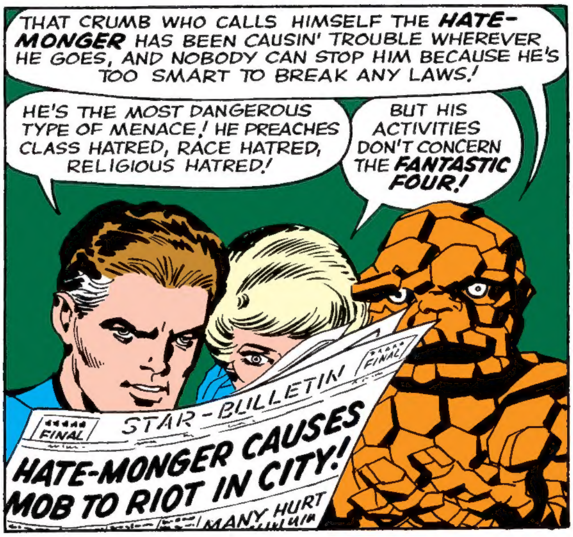
WHILE IN THE PRIVACY OF HER OWN QUARTERS, THE THIRD MEMBER OF AMERICA'S MOST COLORFUL QUARTET IS PROVING THAT A GIRL IS A GIRL, EVEN WHEN SHE'S A FULL-FLEDGED PARTNER OF THE FANTASTIC FOUR...

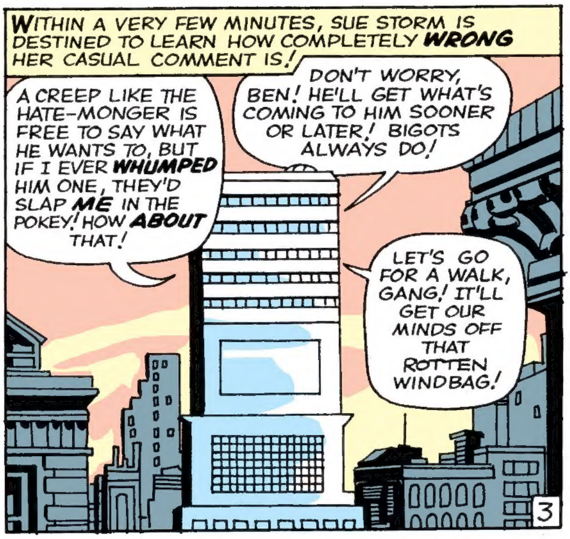

I COULD SPEND **HOURS** TRYING ON THESE GORGEOUS FASHION WIGS! I ALWAYS **WONDERED** HOW I'D LOOK WITH BLACK HAIR!
IF THEY EVER WANT TO FILM A SEQUEL TO **CLEOPATRA**, AND IF **LIZ TAYLOR** IS TOO BUSY... HMMMM...

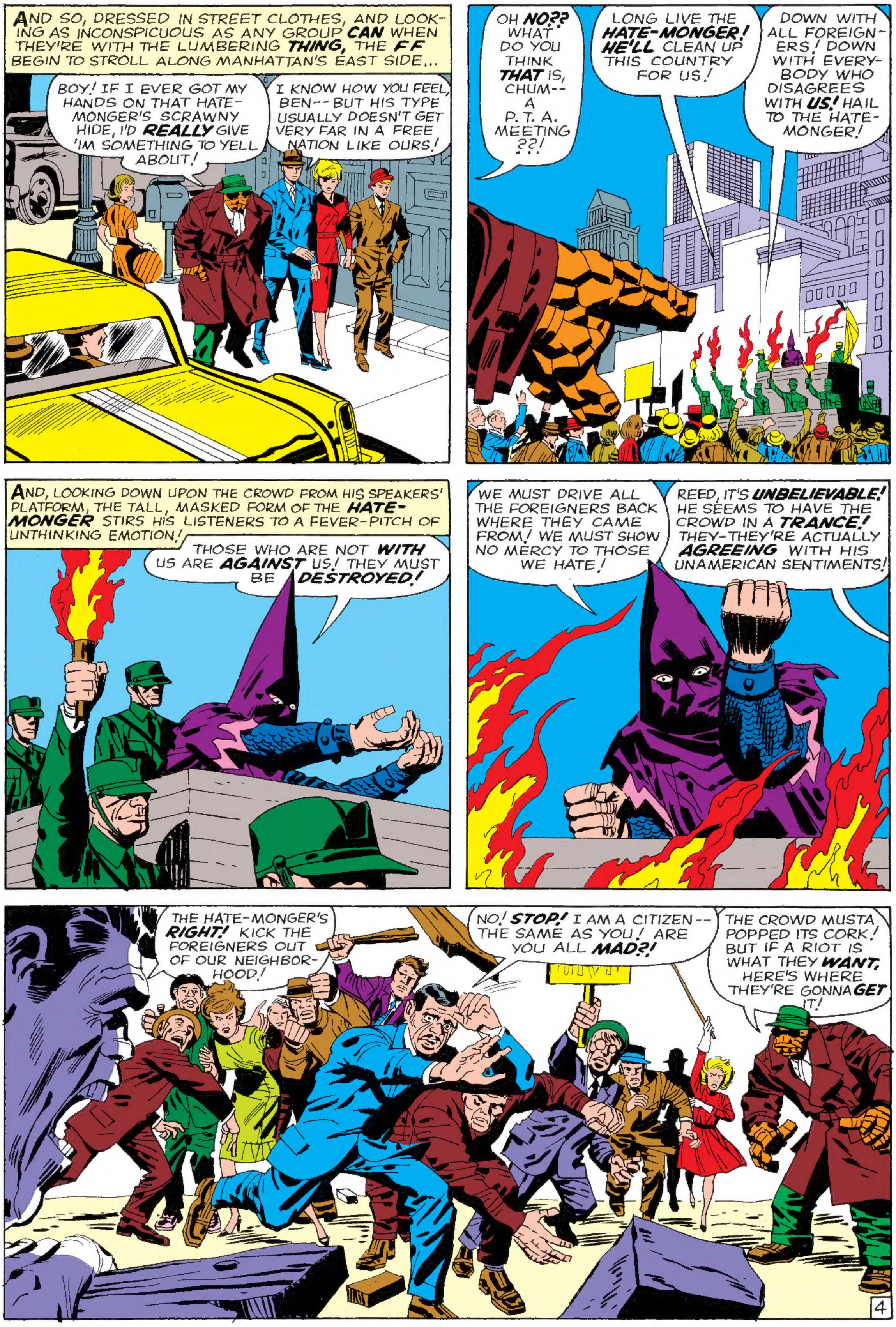

AT THAT MOMENT, OUR DAY-DREAMING BEAUTY ALSO FEELS THE IMPACT WHICH SHAKES THE VERY WALLS!
WHAT ON EARTH--?!! IT-IT FEELS LIKE IT'S COMING FROM **BEN'S** QUARTERS!
BAM!

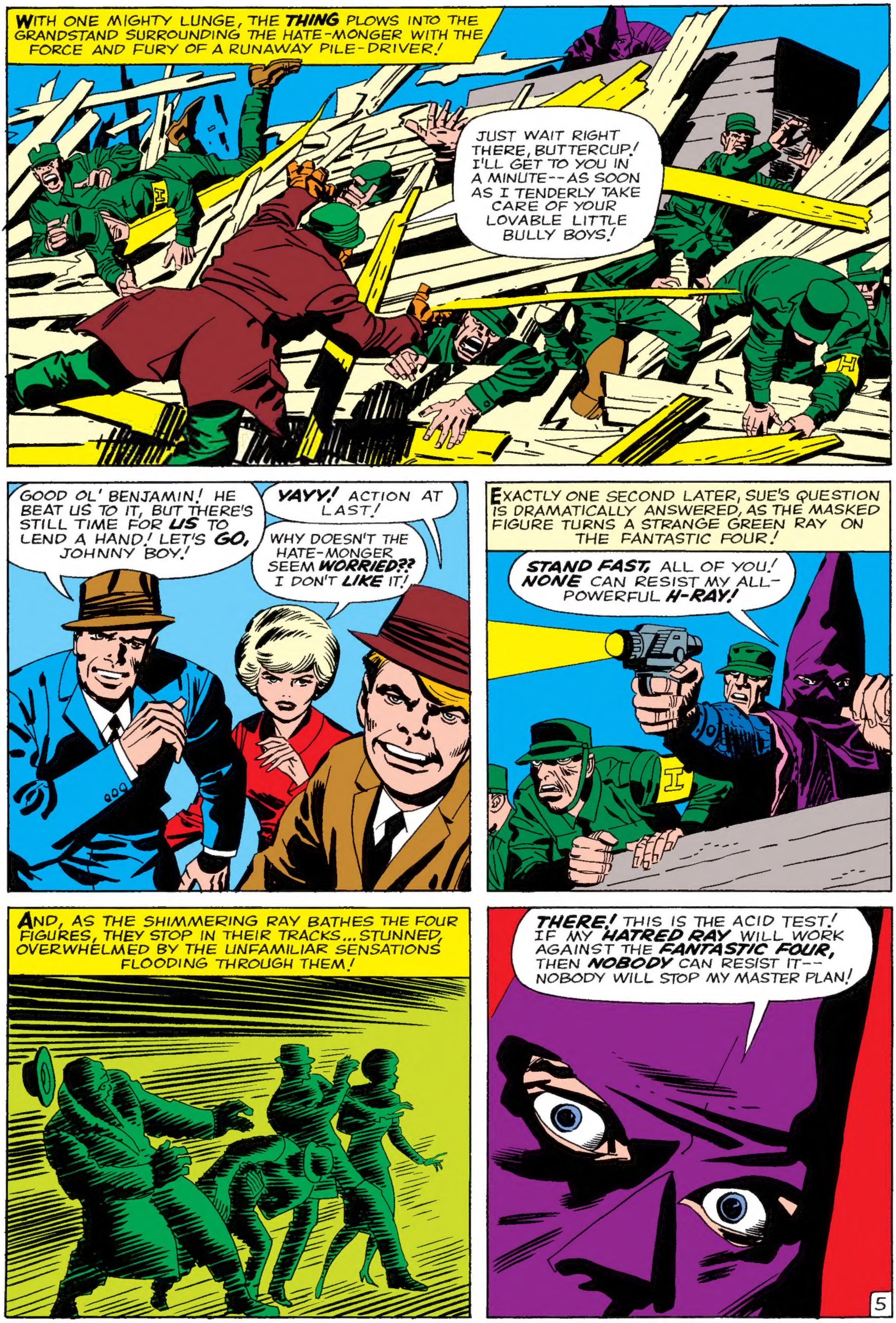

AND SUE'S GUESS PROVES TO BE CORRECT!
WHAAM
AT **LAST** I MADE MYSELF A PUNCHING BAG THAT'S GOT SOME **OOMPH** TO IT!
POW!

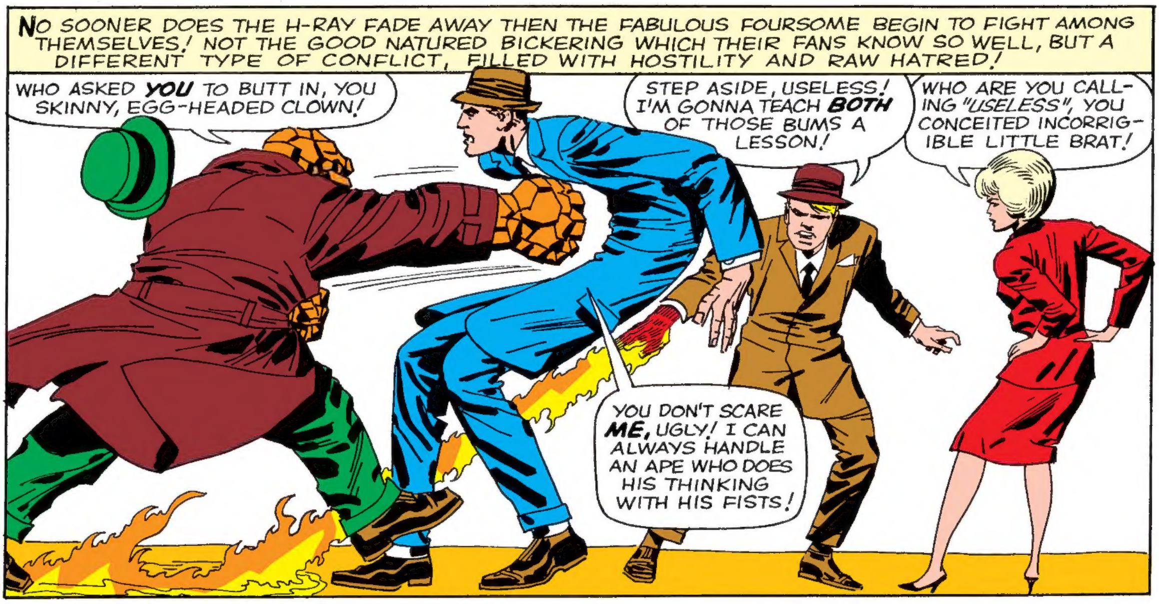

BEN! WHOA, BIG FELLA--HOLD IT! YOU'RE UPSETTING SOME OF MY MOST SENSITIVE INSTRUMENTS!
I MIGHTA **KNOWN** IT WAS OL' MUSCLE-BRAIN HIMSELF!
WHAT'S **WRONG,** BEN? YOU'RE SMASHING THAT STEEL PUNCHING BAG AS THOUGH YOU'RE TRYING TO PUNCH IT OUT OF THE BUILDING!
SO **WHAT?!!** I'M SO COTTON-PICKIN' **MAD** I'VE GOTTA DO **SOMETHING** TO LET OFF STEAM! I'VE BEEN READIN' THE **PAPERS** FOR THE PAST HOUR --IT'S ENOUGH TO MAKE **ANYONE** BLOW HIS TOP!
AND IF I **STILL** GOTTA SPELL IT OUT FOR YOU, JUST TAKE A SQUINT AT SOME OF THOSE HEADLINES!
TROOPS CALLED OUT!
BATTLE RAGES IN FAR EAST!

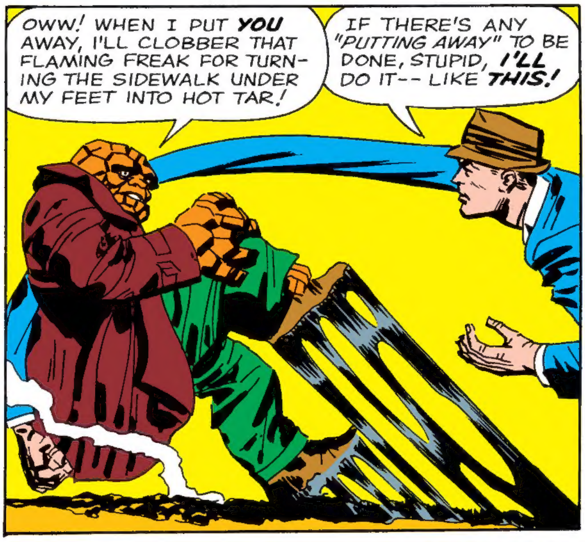

THAT CRUMB WHO CALLS HIMSELF THE **HATE-MONGER** HAS BEEN CAUSIN' TROUBLE WHEREVER HE GOES, AND NOBODY CAN STOP HIM BECAUSE HE'S TOO SMART TO BREAK ANY LAWS!
HE'S THE MOST DANGEROUS TYPE OF MENACE! HE PREACHES CLASS HATRED, RACE HATRED, RELIGIOUS HATRED!
BUT HIS ACTIVITIES DON'T CONCERN THE **FANTASTIC FOUR!**
STAR-BULLETIN
FINAL
FINAL
HATE-MONGER CAUSES MOB TO RIOT IN CITY!
MANY HURT

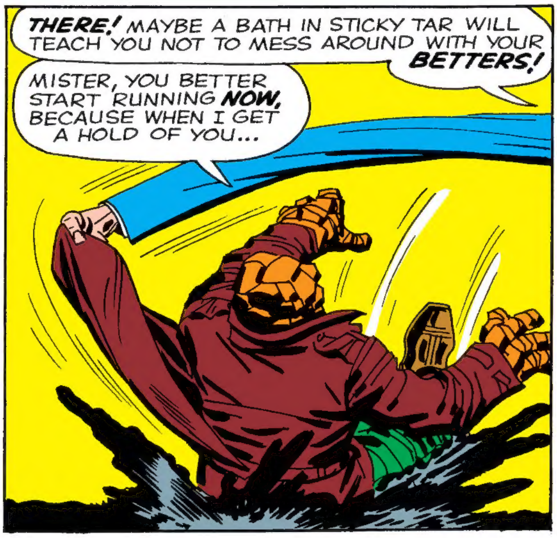

WITHIN A VERY FEW MINUTES, SUE STORM IS DESTINED TO LEARN HOW COMPLETELY **WRONG** HER CASUAL COMMENT IS!
A CREEP LIKE THE HATE-MONGER IS FREE TO SAY WHAT HE WANTS TO, BUT IF I EVER **WHUMPED** HIM ONE, THEY'D SLAP **ME** IN THE POKEY! HOW **ABOUT** THAT!
DON'T WORRY, BEN! HE'LL GET WHAT'S COMING TO HIM SOONER OR LATER! BIGOTS ALWAYS DO!
LET'S GO FOR A WALK, GANG! IT'LL GET OUR MINDS OFF THAT ROTTEN WINDBAG!

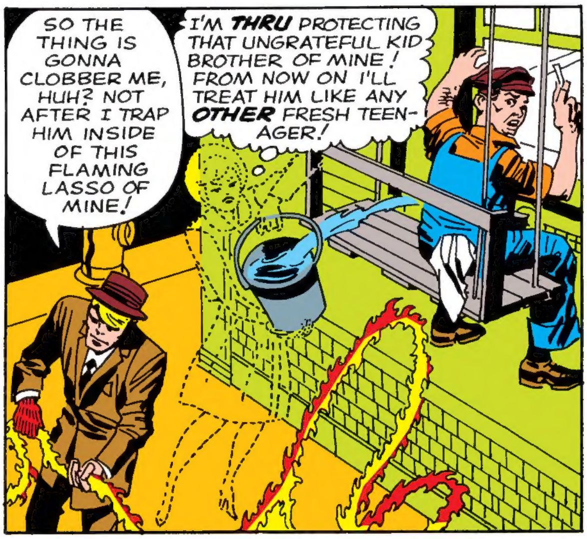

AND SO, DRESSED IN STREET CLOTHES, AND LOOKING AS INCONSPICUOUS AS ANY GROUP **CAN** WHEN THEY'RE WITH THE LUMBERING **THING,** THE **FF** BEGIN TO STROLL ALONG MANHATTAN'S EAST SIDE...
BOY! IF I EVER GOT MY HANDS ON THAT HATE-MONGER'S SCRAWNY HIDE, I'D **REALLY** GIVE 'IM SOMETHING TO YELL ABOUT!
I KNOW HOW YOU FEEL, BEN--BUT HIS TYPE USUALLY DOESN'T GET VERY FAR IN A FREE NATION LIKE OURS!
OH **NO??** WHAT DO YOU THINK **THAT** IS, CHUM-- A P. T. A. MEETING ??!
LONG LIVE THE **HATE-MONGER! HE'LL** CLEAN UP THIS COUNTRY FOR US!
DOWN WITH ALL FOREIGNERS! DOWN WITH EVERYBODY WHO DISAGREES WITH **US!** HAIL TO THE HATE-MONGER!
AND, LOOKING DOWN UPON THE CROWD FROM HIS SPEAKERS' PLATFORM, THE TALL, MASKED FORM OF THE **HATE-MONGER** STIRS HIS LISTENERS TO A FEVER-PITCH OF UNTHINKING EMOTION!
THOSE WHO ARE NOT **WITH** US ARE **AGAINST** US! THEY MUST BE **DESTROYED!**
WE MUST DRIVE ALL THE FOREIGNERS BACK WHERE THEY CAME FROM! WE MUST SHOW NO MERCY TO THOSE WE HATE!
REED, IT'S **UNBELIEVABLE!** HE SEEMS TO HAVE THE CROWD IN A **TRANCE!** THEY-THEY'RE ACTUALLY **AGREEING** WITH HIS UNAMERICAN SENTIMENTS!
THE HATE-MONGER'S **RIGHT!** KICK THE FOREIGNERS OUT OF OUR NEIGHBORHOOD!
NO! **STOP!** I AM A CITIZEN-- THE SAME AS YOU! ARE YOU ALL **MAD?!**
THE CROWD MUSTA POPPED ITS CORK! BUT IF A RIOT **WAS** WHAT THEY **WANT,** HERE'S WHERE THEY'RE GONNA **GET** IT!

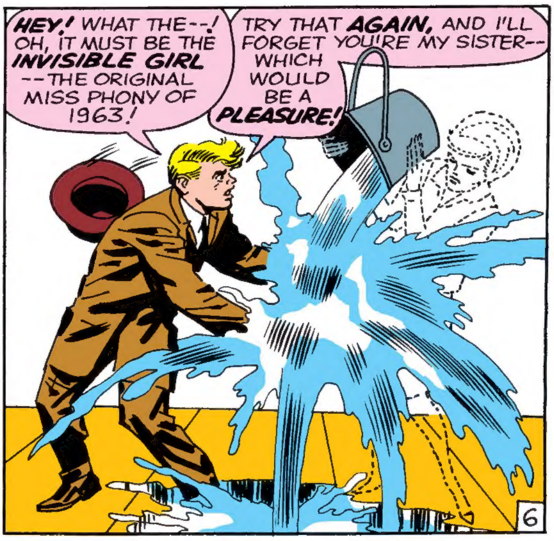

WITH ONE MIGHTY LUNGE, THE **THING** PLOWS INTO THE GRANDSTAND SURROUNDING THE HATE-MONGER WITH THE FORCE AND FURY OF A RUNAWAY PILE-DRIVER!
JUST WAIT RIGHT THERE, BUTTERCUP! I'LL GET TO YOU IN A MINUTE--AS SOON AS I TENDERLY TAKE CARE OF YOUR LOVABLE LITTLE BULLY BOYS!
H
GOOD OL' BENJAMIN! HE BEAT US TO IT, BUT THERE'S STILL TIME FOR **US** TO LEND A HAND! LET'S **GO,** JOHNNY BOY!
YAYY! ACTION AT LAST!
WHY DOESN'T THE HATE-MONGER SEEM **WORRIED??** I DON'T **LIKE** IT!
EXACTLY ONE SECOND LATER, SUE'S QUESTION IS DRAMATICALLY ANSWERED, AS THE MASKED FIGURE TURNS A STRANGE GREEN RAY ON THE FANTASTIC FOUR!
STAND FAST, ALL OF YOU! **NONE** CAN RESIST MY ALL-POWERFUL **H-RAY!**
AND, AS THE SHIMMERING RAY BATHES THE FOUR FIGURES, THEY STOP IN THEIR TRACKS...STUNNED, OVERWHELMED BY THE UNFAMILIAR SENSATIONS FLOODING THROUGH THEM!
THERE! THIS IS THE ACID TEST! IF MY **HATRED RAY** WILL WORK AGAINST THE **FANTASTIC FOUR,** THEN **NOBODY** CAN RESIST IT-- NOBODY WILL STOP MY MASTER PLAN!

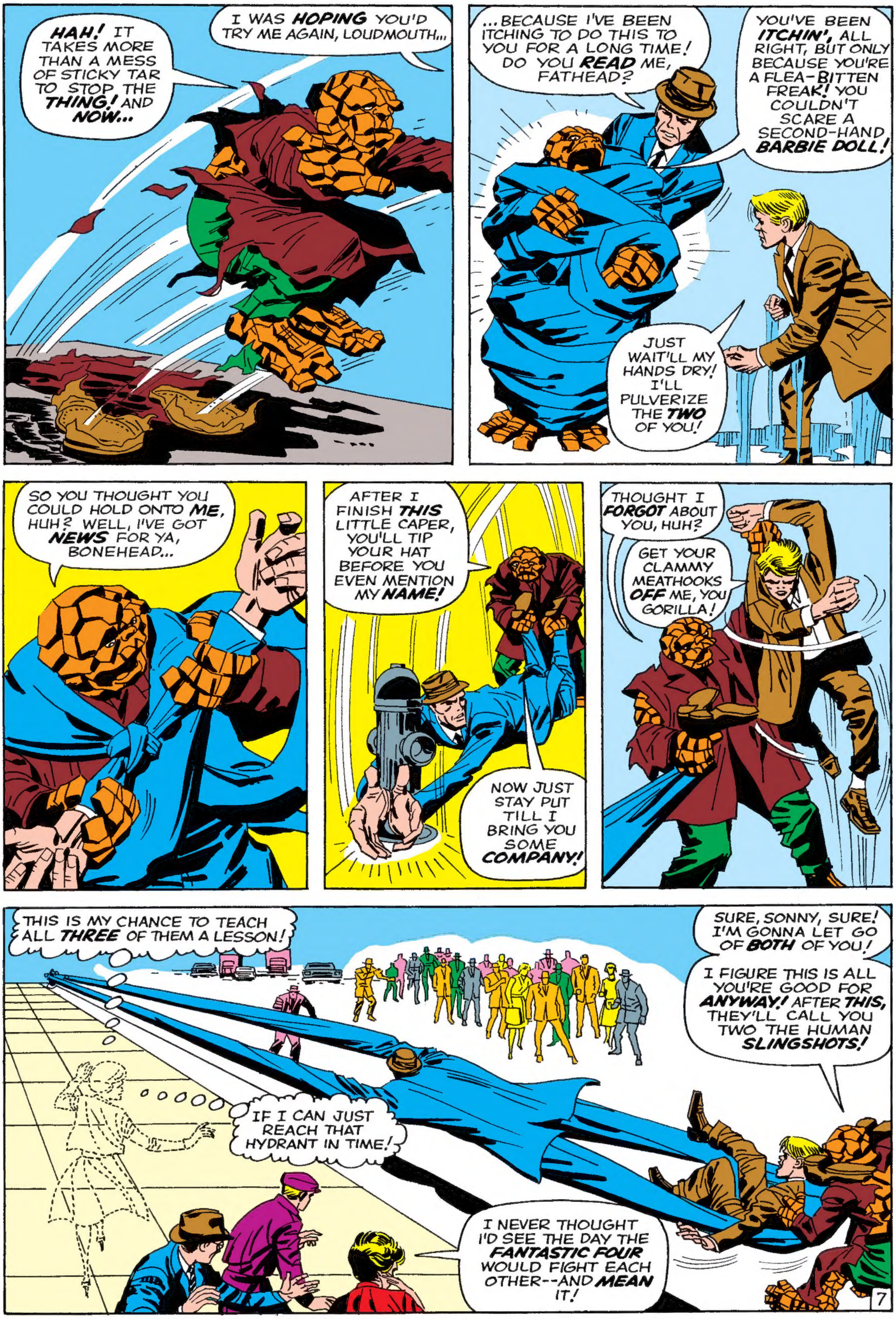

NO SOONER DOES THE H-RAY FADE AWAY THEN THE FABULOUS FOURSOME BEGIN TO FIGHT AMONG THEMSELVES! NOT THE GOOD NATURED BICKERING WHICH THEIR FANS KNOW SO WELL, BUT A DIFFERENT TYPE OF CONFLICT, FILLED WITH HOSTILITY AND RAW HATRED!
WHO ASKED **YOU** TO BUTT IN, YOU SKINNY, EGG-HEADED CLOWN!
STEP ASIDE, USELESS! I'M GONNA TEACH **BOTH** OF THOSE BUMS A LESSON!
WHO ARE YOU CALLING "USELESS", YOU CONCEITED INCORRIGIBLE LITTLE BRAT!
YOU DON'T SCARE **ME,** UGLY! I CAN ALWAYS HANDLE AN APE WHO DOES HIS THINKING WITH HIS FISTS!

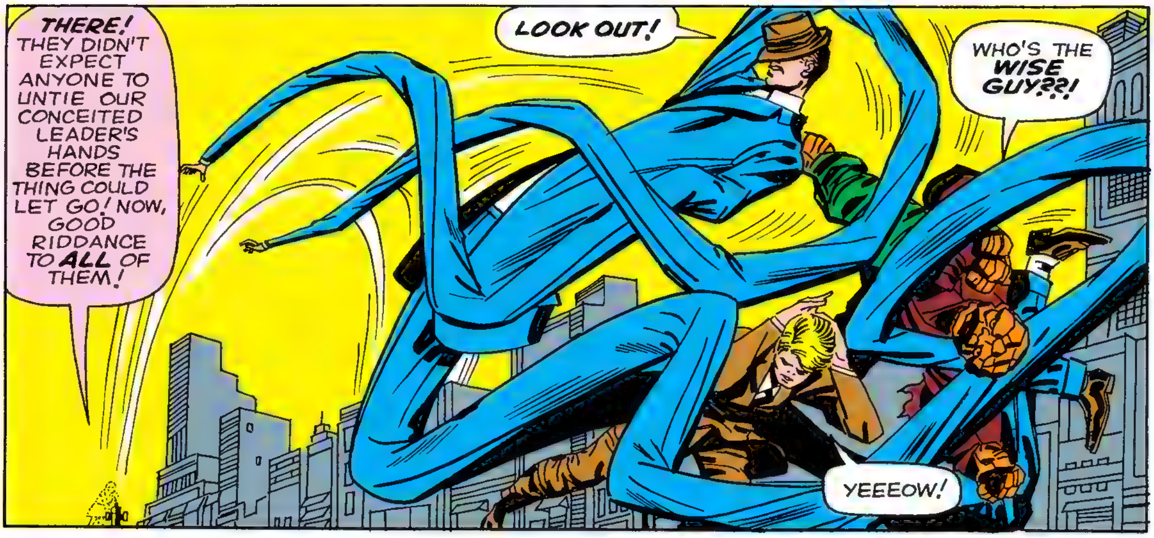

OWW! WHEN I PUT **YOU** AWAY, I'LL CLOBBER THAT FLAMING FREAK FOR TURNING THE SIDEWALK UNDER MY FEET INTO HOT TAR!
IF THERE'S ANY "PUTTING AWAY" TO BE DONE, STUPID, ***I'LL*** DO IT-- LIKE ***THIS!***

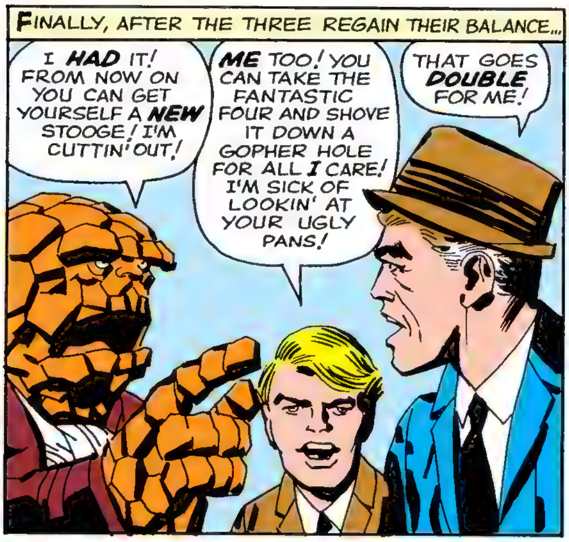

THERE! MAYBE A BATH IN STICKY TAR WILL TEACH YOU NOT TO MESS AROUND WITH YOUR ***BETTERS!***
MISTER, YOU BETTER START RUNNING ***NOW,*** BECAUSE WHEN I GET A HOLD OF YOU...

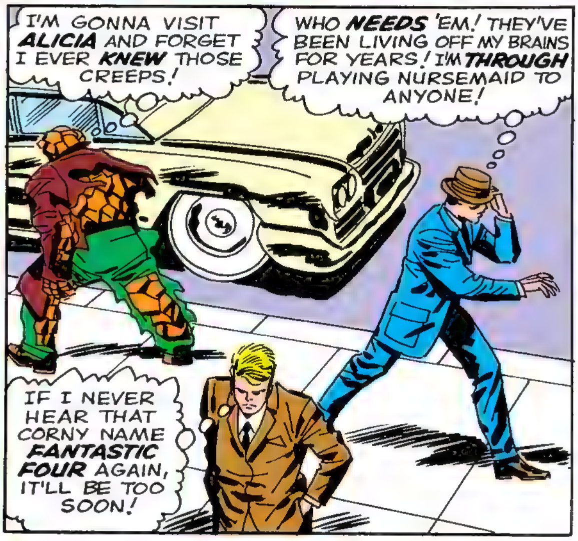

SO THE THING IS GONNA CLOBBER ME, HUH? NOT AFTER I TRAP HIM INSIDE OF THIS FLAMING LASSO OF MINE!
I'M ***THRU*** PROTECTING THAT UNGRATEFUL KID BROTHER OF MINE! FROM NOW ON I'LL TREAT HIM LIKE ANY ***OTHER*** FRESH TEEN-AGER!

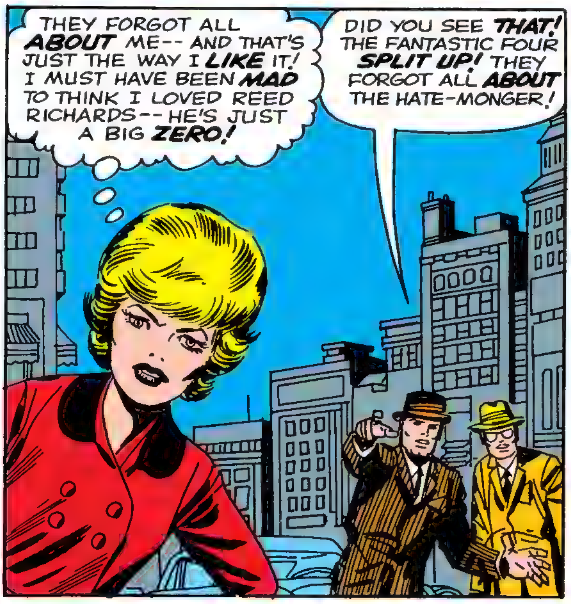

HEY! WHAT THE--! OH, IT MUST BE THE ***INVISIBLE GIRL*** --THE ORIGINAL MISS PHONY OF 1963!
TRY THAT ***AGAIN,*** AND I'LL FORGET YOU'RE MY SISTER-- WHICH WOULD BE A ***PLEASURE!***

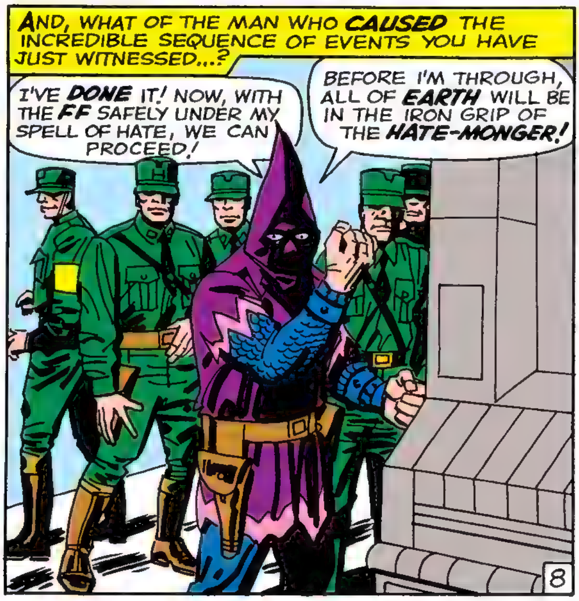

HAH! IT TAKES MORE THAN A MESS OF STICKY TAR TO STOP THE THING! AND NOW...
I WAS HOPING YOU'D TRY ME AGAIN, LOUDMOUTH...
...BECAUSE I'VE BEEN ITCHING TO DO THIS TO YOU FOR A LONG TIME! DO YOU READ ME, FATHEAD?
YOU'VE BEEN ITCHIN', ALL RIGHT, BUT ONLY BECAUSE YOU'RE A FLEA-BITTEN FREAK! YOU COULDN'T SCARE A SECOND-HAND BARBIE DOLL!
JUST WAIT'LL MY HANDS DRY! I'LL PULVERIZE THE TWO OF YOU!
SO YOU THOUGHT YOU COULD HOLD ONTO ME, HUH? WELL, I'VE GOT NEWS FOR YA, BONEHEAD...
AFTER I FINISH THIS LITTLE CAPER, YOU'LL TIP YOUR HAT BEFORE YOU EVEN MENTION MY NAME!
NOW JUST STAY PUT TILL I BRING YOU SOME COMPANY!
THOUGHT I FORGOT ABOUT YOU, HUH?
GET YOUR CLAMMY MEATHOOKS OFF ME, YOU GORILLA!
THIS IS MY CHANCE TO TEACH ALL THREE OF THEM A LESSON!
SURE, SONNY, SURE! I'M GONNA LET GO OF BOTH OF YOU!
I FIGURE THIS IS ALL YOU'RE GOOD FOR ANYWAY! AFTER THIS, THEY'LL CALL YOU TWO THE HUMAN SLINGSHOTS!
IF I CAN JUST REACH THAT HYDRANT IN TIME!
I NEVER THOUGHT I'D SEE THE DAY THE FANTASTIC FOUR WOULD FIGHT EACH OTHER--AND MEAN IT!

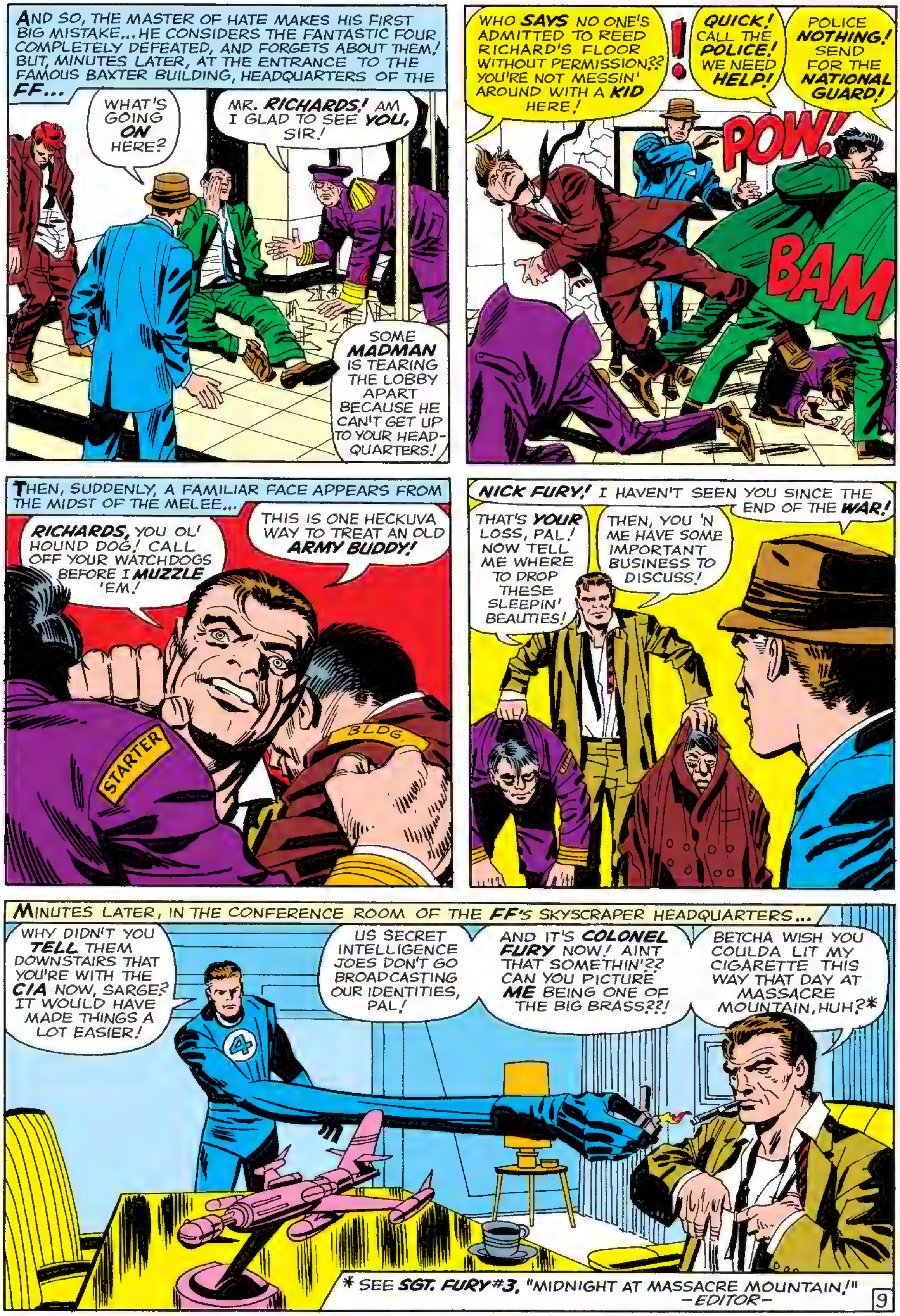

THERE! THEY DIDN'T EXPECT ANYONE TO UNTIE OUR CONCEITED LEADER'S HANDS BEFORE THE THING COULD LET GO! NOW, GOOD RIDDANCE TO ALL OF THEM!
LOOK OUT!
WHO'S THE WISE GUY??!
YEEEOW!


FINALLY, AFTER THE THREE REGAIN THEIR BALANCE...
I HAD IT! FROM NOW ON YOU CAN GET YOURSELF A NEW STOOGE! I'M CUTTIN' OUT!
ME TOO! YOU CAN TAKE THE FANTASTIC FOUR AND SHOVE IT DOWN A GOPHER HOLE FOR ALL I CARE! I'M SICK OF LOOKIN' AT YOUR UGLY PANS!
THAT GOES DOUBLE FOR ME!


I'M GONNA VISIT ALICIA AND FORGET I EVER KNEW THOSE CREEPS!
WHO NEEDS 'EM! THEY'VE BEEN LIVING OFF MY BRAINS FOR YEARS! I'M THROUGH PLAYING NURSEMAID TO ANYONE!
IF I NEVER HEAR THAT CORNY NAME FANTASTIC FOUR AGAIN, IT'LL BE TOO SOON!


THEY FORGOT ALL ABOUT ME-- AND THAT'S JUST THE WAY I LIKE IT! I MUST HAVE BEEN MAD TO THINK I LOVED REED RICHARDS--HE'S JUST A BIG ZERO!
DID YOU SEE THAT! THE FANTASTIC FOUR SPLIT UP! THEY FORGOT ALL ABOUT THE HATE-MONGER!


AND, WHAT OF THE MAN WHO CAUSED THE INCREDIBLE SEQUENCE OF EVENTS YOU HAVE JUST WITNESSED...?
I'VE DONE IT! NOW, WITH THE FF SAFELY UNDER MY SPELL OF HATE, WE CAN PROCEED!
BEFORE I'M THROUGH, ALL OF EARTH WILL BE IN THE IRON GRIP OF THE HATE-MONGER!


AND SO, THE MASTER OF HATE MAKES HIS FIRST BIG MISTAKE... HE CONSIDERS THE FANTASTIC FOUR COMPLETELY DEFEATED, AND FORGETS ABOUT THEM! BUT, MINUTES LATER, AT THE ENTRANCE TO THE FAMOUS BAXTER BUILDING, HEADQUARTERS OF THE FF...
WHAT'S GOING ON HERE?
MR. RICHARDS! AM I GLAD TO SEE YOU, SIR!
SOME MADMAN IS TEARING THE LOBBY APART BECAUSE HE CAN'T GET UP TO YOUR HEADQUARTERS!
WHO SAYS NO ONE'S ADMITTED TO REED RICHARD'S FLOOR WITHOUT PERMISSION?? YOU'RE NOT MESSIN' AROUND WITH A KID HERE!
!
QUICK! CALL THE POLICE! WE NEED HELP!
POLICE NOTHING! SEND FOR THE NATIONAL GUARD!
POW!
BAM
THEN, SUDDENLY, A FAMILIAR FACE APPEARS FROM THE MIDST OF THE MELEE...
RICHARDS, YOU OL' HOUND DOG! CALL OFF YOUR WATCHDOGS BEFORE I MUZZLE 'EM!
THIS IS ONE HECKUVA WAY TO TREAT AN OLD ARMY BUDDY!
STARTER
BLDG.
NICK FURY! I HAVEN'T SEEN YOU SINCE THE END OF THE WAR!
THAT'S YOUR LOSS, PAL! NOW TELL ME WHERE TO DROP THESE SLEEPIN' BEAUTIES!
THEN, YOU 'N ME HAVE SOME IMPORTANT BUSINESS TO DISCUSS!
MINUTES LATER, IN THE CONFERENCE ROOM OF THE FF'S SKYSCRAPER HEADQUARTERS...
WHY DIDN'T YOU TELL THEM DOWNSTAIRS THAT YOU'RE WITH THE CIA NOW, SARGE? IT WOULD HAVE MADE THINGS A LOT EASIER!
US SECRET INTELLIGENCE JOES DON'T GO BROADCASTING OUR IDENTITIES, PAL!
AND IT'S COLONEL FURY NOW! AINT THAT SOMETHIN'?? CAN YOU PICTURE ME BEING ONE OF THE BIG BRASS??!
BETCHA WISH YOU COULDA LIT MY CIGARETTE THIS WAY THAT DAY AT MASSACRE MOUNTAIN, HUH?*
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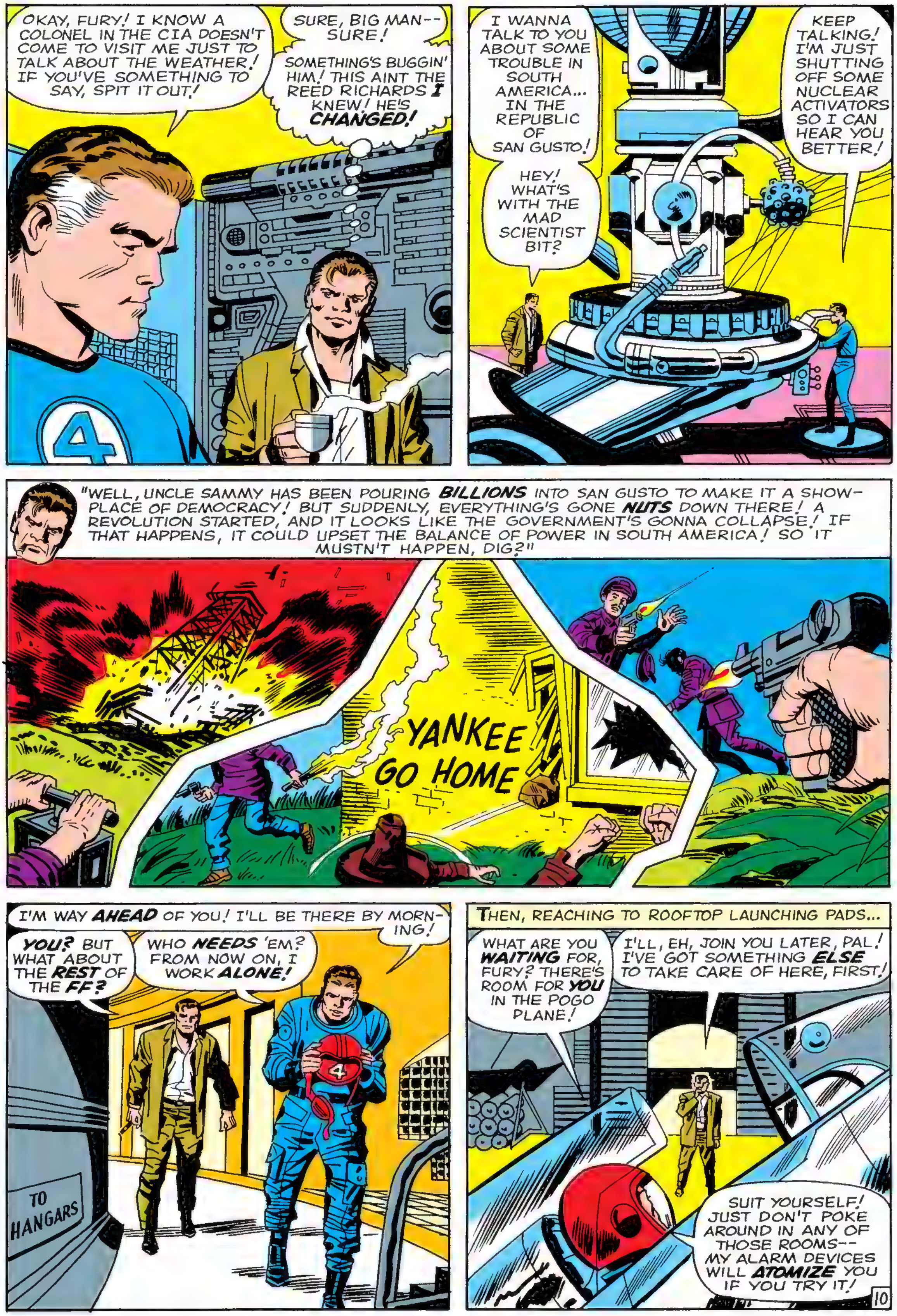
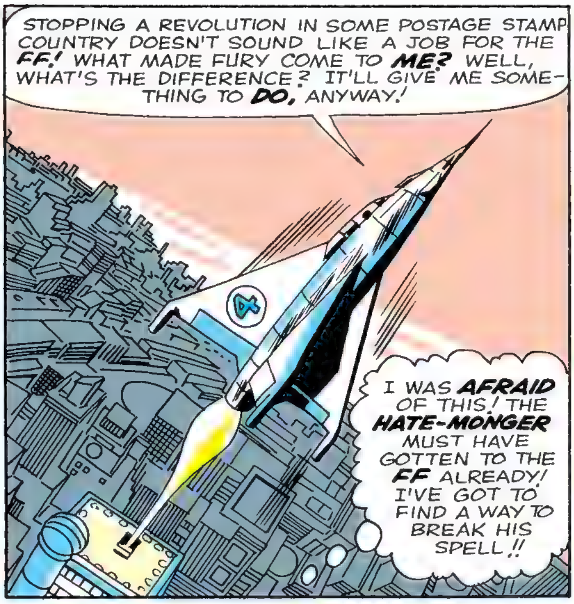
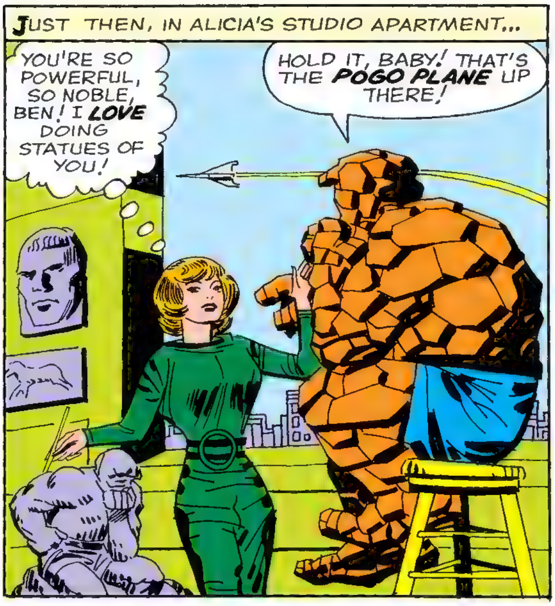
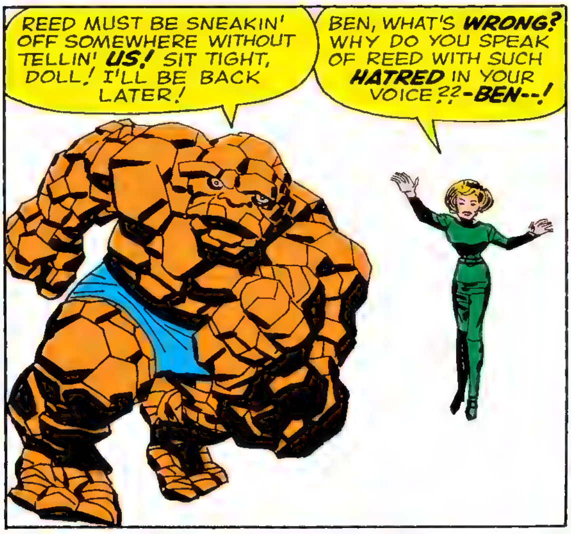
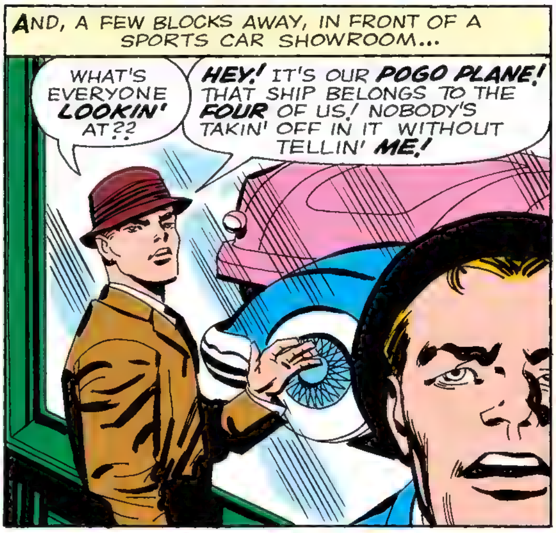
* SEE SGT. FURY #3, "MIDNIGHT AT MASSACRE MOUNTAIN!" —EDITOR—

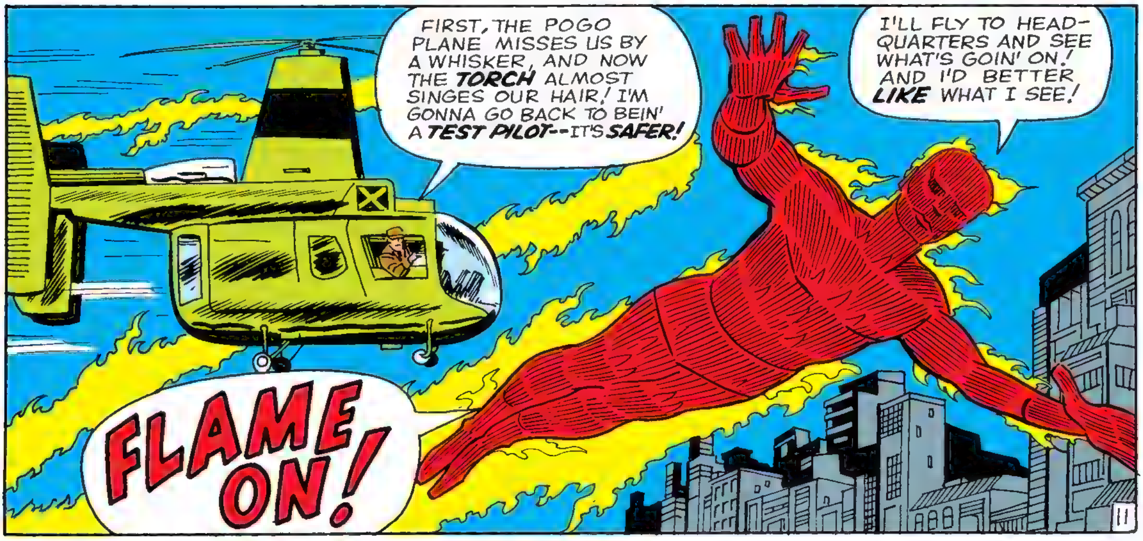

OKAY, FURY! I KNOW A COLONEL IN THE CIA DOESN'T COME TO VISIT ME JUST TO TALK ABOUT THE WEATHER! IF YOU'VE SOMETHING TO SAY, SPIT IT OUT!
SURE, BIG MAN-- SURE!
SOMETHING'S BUGGIN' HIM! THIS AINT THE REED RICHARDS **I** KNEW! HE'S **CHANGED!**
I WANNA TALK TO YOU ABOUT SOME TROUBLE IN SOUTH AMERICA... IN THE REPUBLIC OF SAN GUSTO!
HEY! WHAT'S WITH THE MAD SCIENTIST BIT?
KEEP TALKING! I'M JUST SHUTTING OFF SOME NUCLEAR ACTIVATORS SO I CAN HEAR YOU BETTER!
"WELL, UNCLE SAMMY HAS BEEN POURING **BILLIONS** INTO SAN GUSTO TO MAKE IT A SHOW-PLACE OF DEMOCRACY! BUT SUDDENLY, EVERYTHING'S GONE **NUTS** DOWN THERE! A REVOLUTION STARTED, AND IT LOOKS LIKE THE GOVERNMENT'S GONNA COLLAPSE! IF THAT HAPPENS, IT COULD UPSET THE BALANCE OF POWER IN SOUTH AMERICA! SO IT MUSTN'T HAPPEN, DIG?"
YANKEE GO HOME
I'M WAY **AHEAD** OF YOU! I'LL BE THERE BY MORNING!
YOU? BUT WHAT ABOUT THE **REST** OF THE **FF?**
WHO **NEEDS** 'EM? FROM NOW ON, I WORK **ALONE!**
TO HANGARS
THEN, REACHING TO ROOFTOP LAUNCHING PADS...
WHAT ARE YOU **WAITING** FOR, FURY? THERE'S ROOM FOR **YOU** IN THE POGO PLANE!
I'LL, EH, JOIN YOU LATER, PAL! I'VE GOT SOMETHING **ELSE** TO TAKE CARE OF HERE, FIRST!
SUIT YOURSELF! JUST DON'T POKE AROUND IN ANY OF THOSE ROOMS-- MY ALARM DEVICES WILL **ATOMIZE** YOU IF YOU TRY IT!

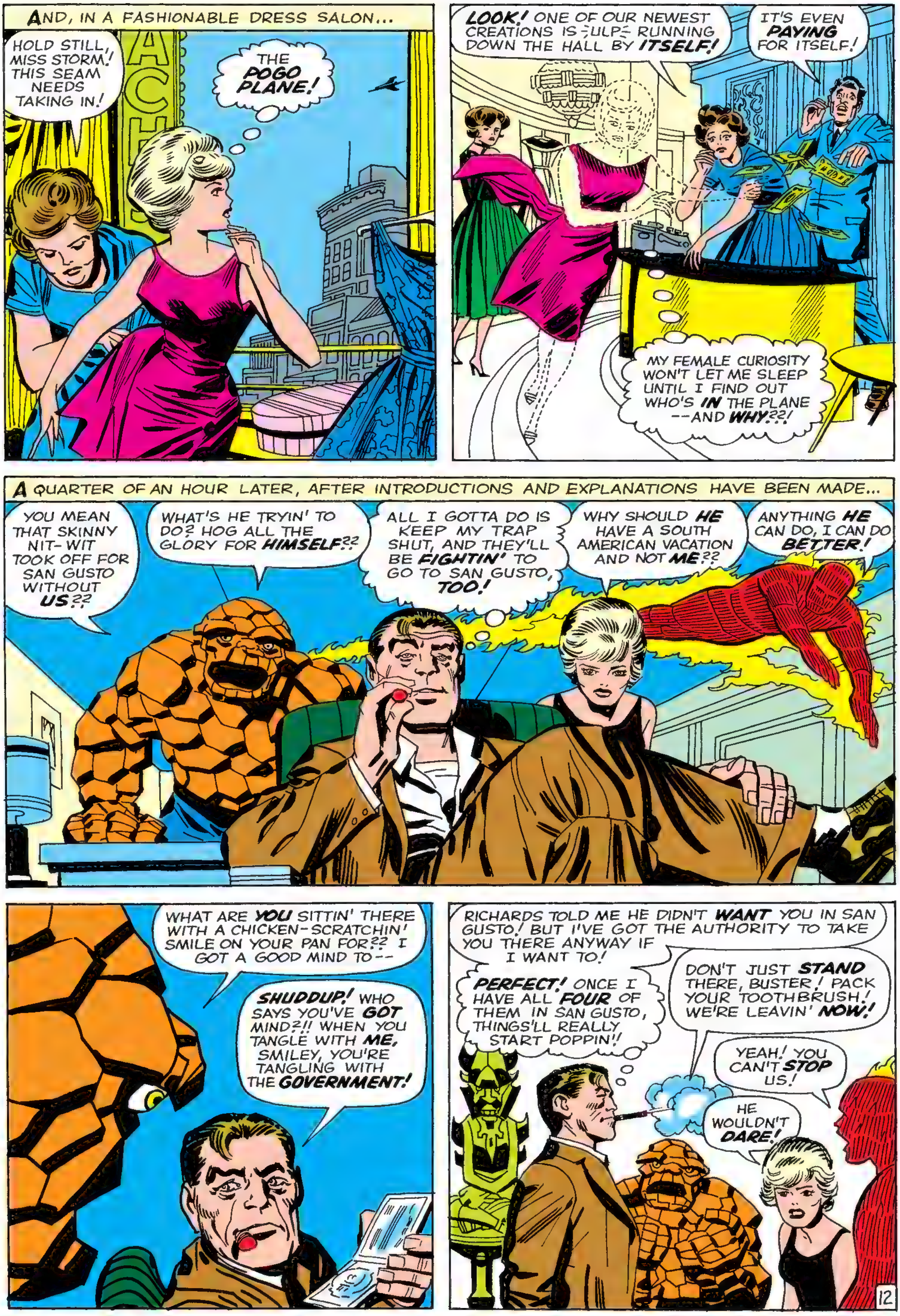

STOPPING A REVOLUTION IN SOME POSTAGE STAMP COUNTRY DOESN'T SOUND LIKE A JOB FOR THE **FF!** WHAT MADE FURY COME TO **ME?** WELL, WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE? IT'LL GIVE ME SOMETHING TO **DO,** ANYWAY!
I WAS **AFRAID** OF THIS! THE **HATE-MONGER** MUST HAVE GOTTEN TO THE **FF** ALREADY! I'VE GOT TO FIND A WAY TO BREAK HIS SPELL!!

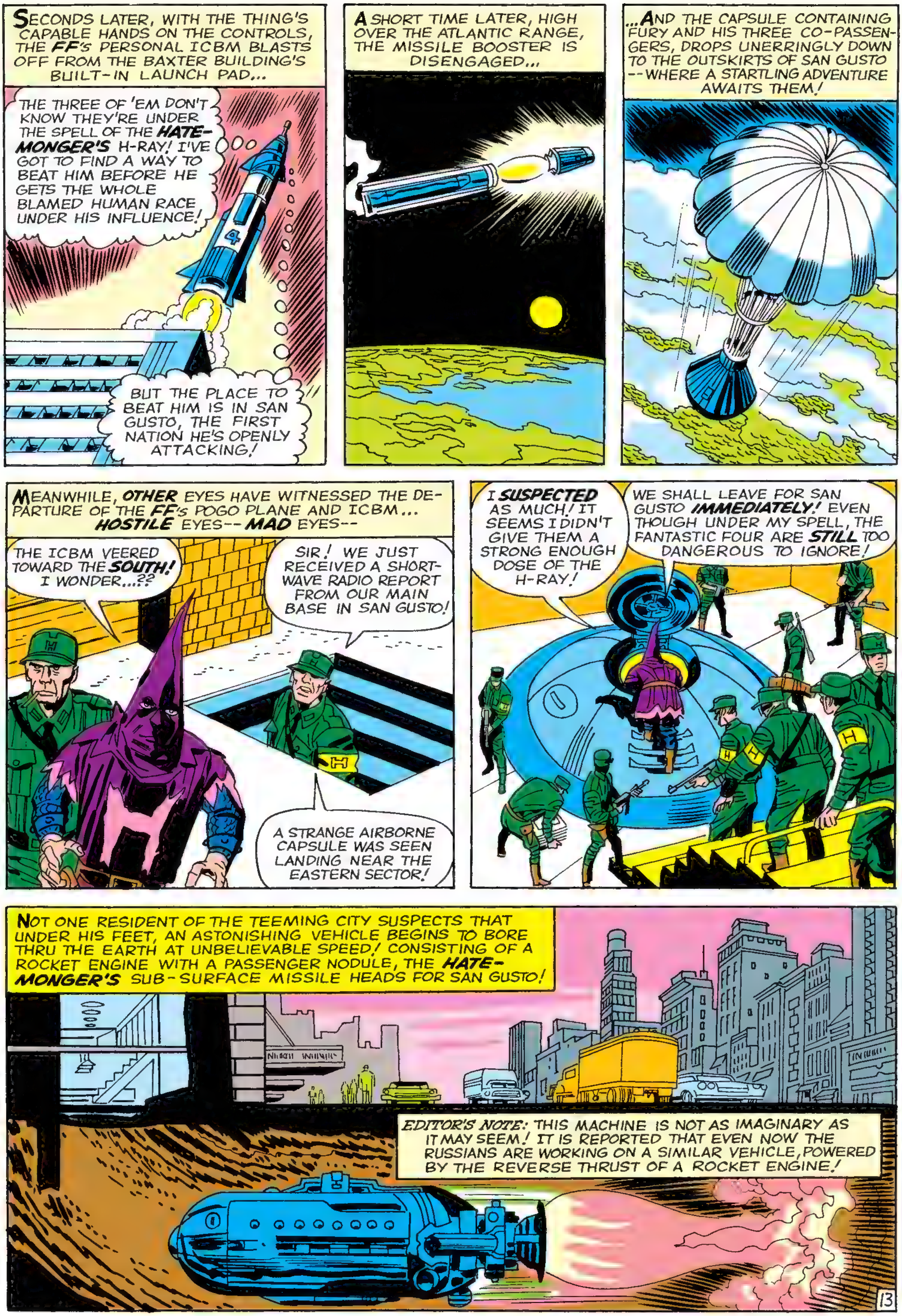

JUST THEN, IN ALICIA'S STUDIO APARTMENT...
YOU'RE SO POWERFUL, SO NOBLE, BEN! I **LOVE** DOING STATUES OF YOU!
HOLD IT, BABY! THAT'S THE **POGO PLANE** UP THERE!

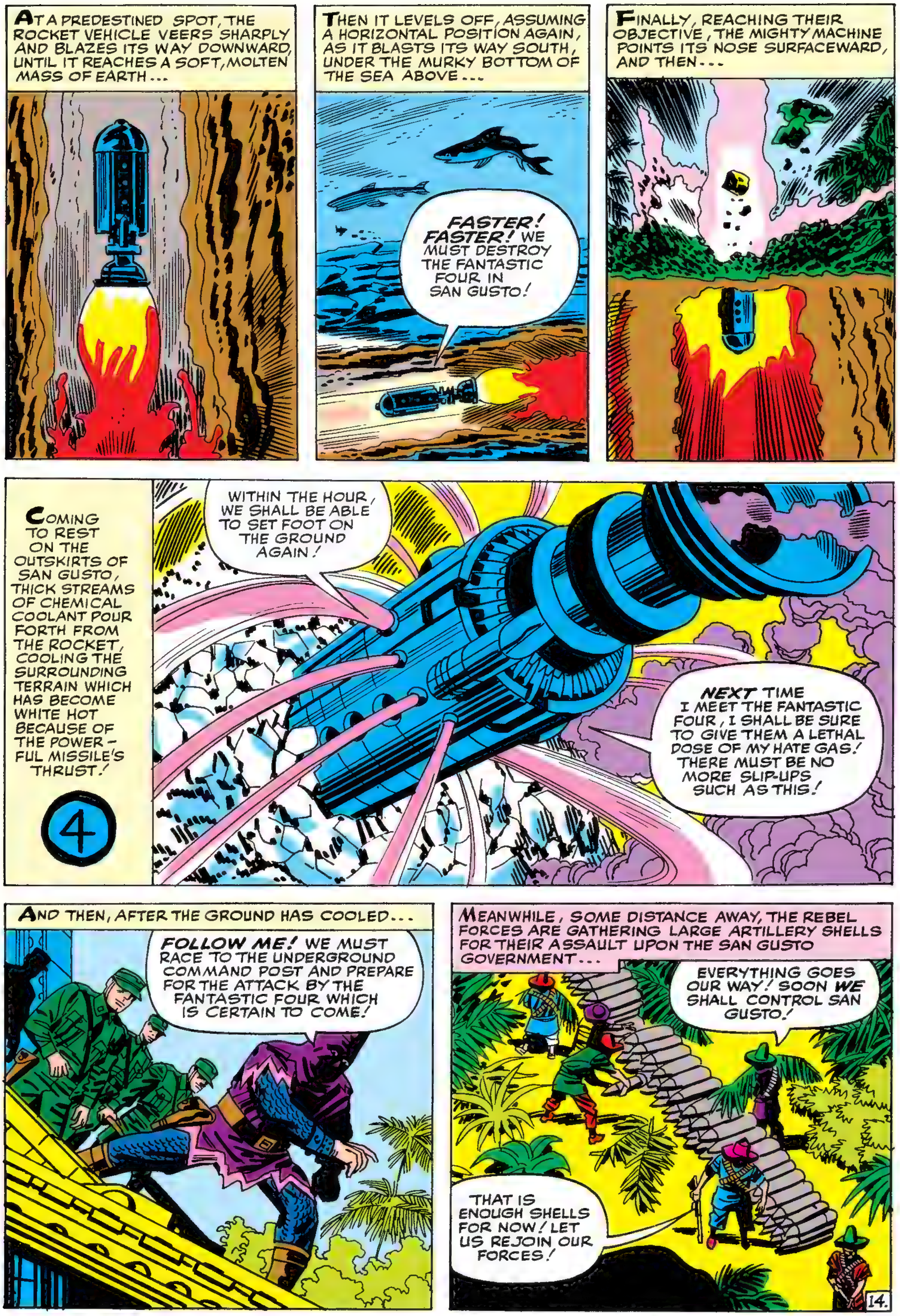

REED MUST BE SNEAKIN' OFF SOMEWHERE WITHOUT TELLIN' **US!** SIT TIGHT, DOLL! I'LL BE BACK LATER!
BEN, WHAT'S **WRONG?** WHY DO YOU SPEAK OF REED WITH SUCH **HATRED** IN YOUR VOICE?? -**BEN**--!

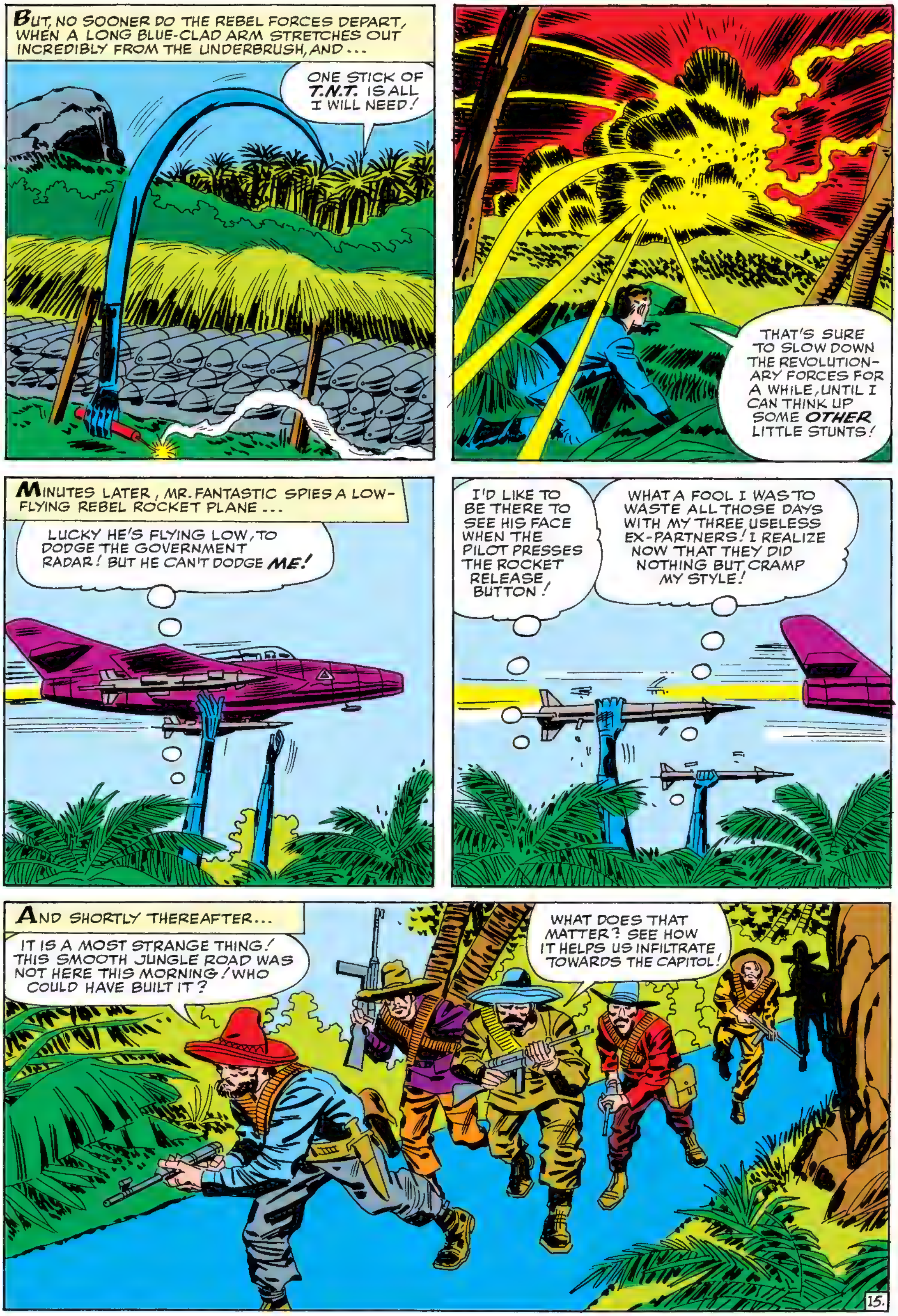

AND, A FEW BLOCKS AWAY, IN FRONT OF A SPORTS CAR SHOWROOM...
WHAT'S EVERYONE **LOOKIN'** AT??
HEY! IT'S OUR **POGO PLANE!** THAT SHIP BELONGS TO THE **FOUR** OF US! NOBODY'S TAKIN' OFF IN IT WITHOUT TELLIN' **ME!**

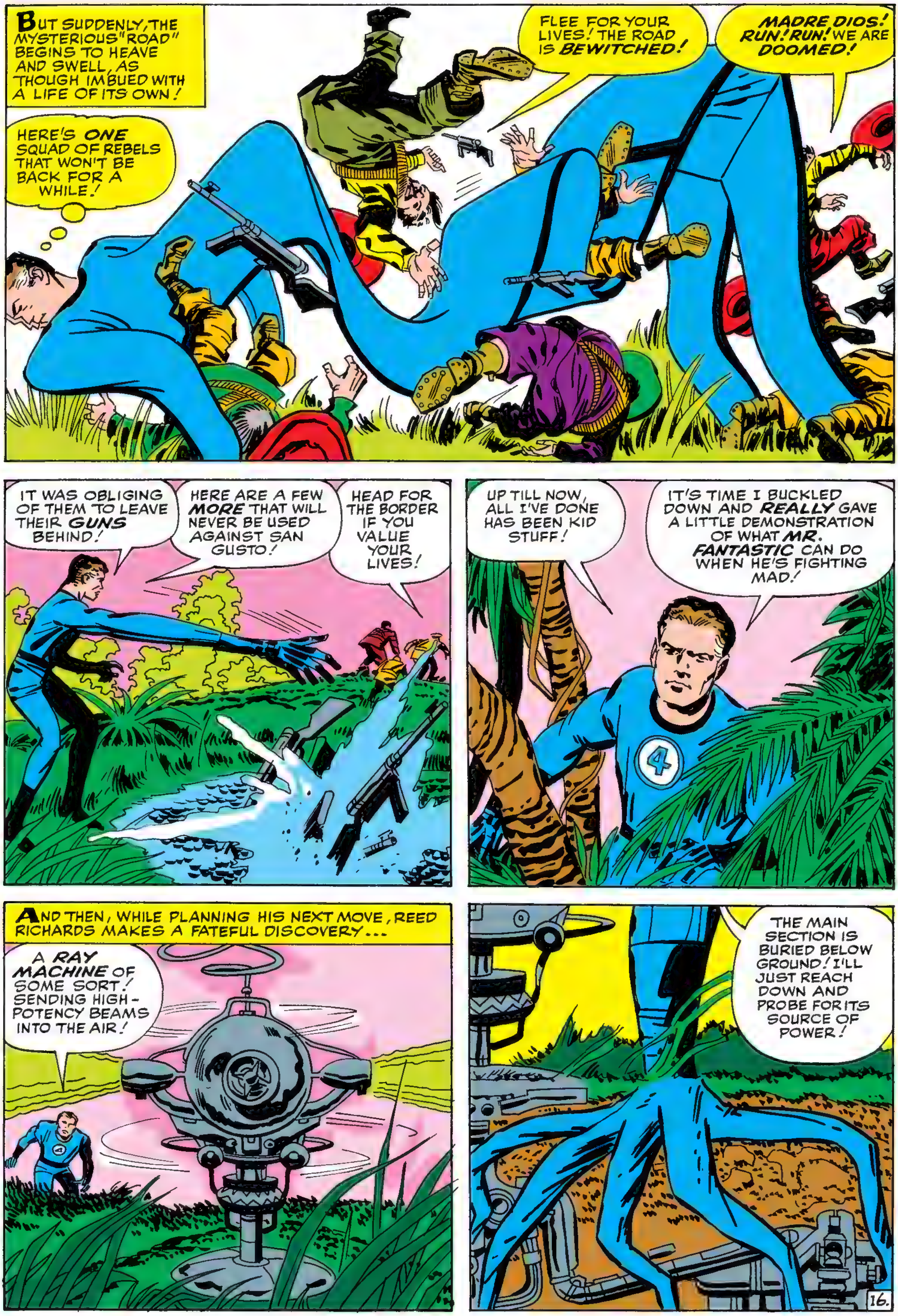

FIRST, THE POGO PLANE MISSES US BY A WHISKER, AND NOW THE **TORCH** ALMOST SINGES OUR HAIR! I'M GONNA GO BACK TO BEIN' A **TEST PILOT**--IT'S **SAFER!**
I'LL FLY TO HEADQUARTERS AND SEE WHAT'S GOIN' ON! AND I'D BETTER **LIKE** WHAT I SEE!
FLAME ON!

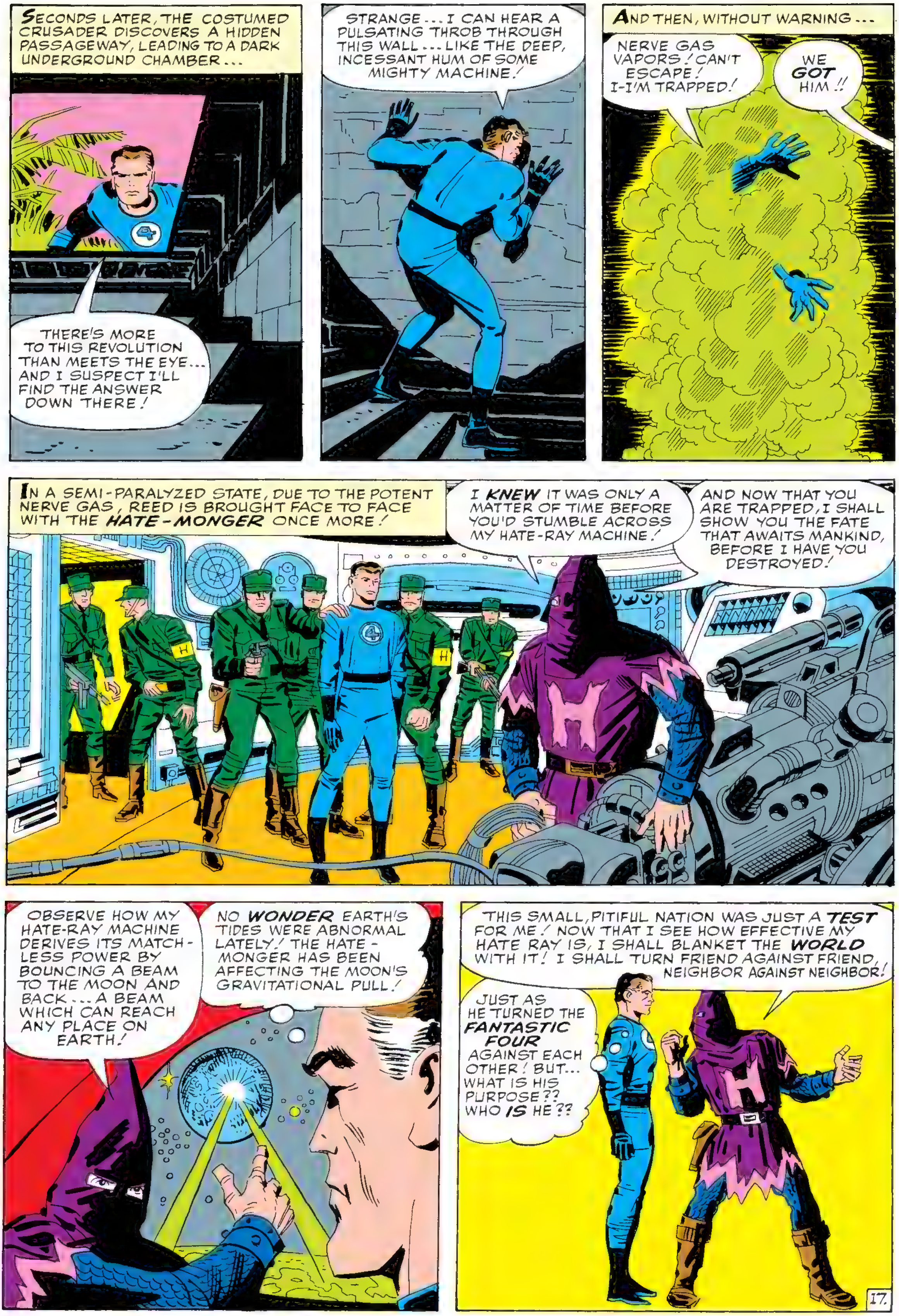

AND, IN A FASHIONABLE DRESS SALON...
HOLD STILL, MISS STORM! THIS SEAM NEEDS TAKING IN!
THE POGO PLANE!
LOOK! ONE OF OUR NEWEST CREATIONS IS -ULP- RUNNING DOWN THE HALL BY ITSELF!
IT'S EVEN PAYING FOR ITSELF!
MY FEMALE CURIOSITY WON'T LET ME SLEEP UNTIL I FIND OUT WHO'S IN THE PLANE --AND WHY??!
A QUARTER OF AN HOUR LATER, AFTER INTRODUCTIONS AND EXPLANATIONS HAVE BEEN MADE...
YOU MEAN THAT SKINNY NIT-WIT TOOK OFF FOR SAN GUSTO WITHOUT US??
WHAT'S HE TRYIN' TO DO? HOG ALL THE GLORY FOR HIMSELF??
ALL I GOTTA DO IS KEEP MY TRAP SHUT, AND THEY'LL BE FIGHTIN' TO GO TO SAN GUSTO, TOO!
WHY SHOULD HE HAVE A SOUTH AMERICAN VACATION AND NOT ME??
ANYTHING HE CAN DO, I CAN DO BETTER!
WHAT ARE YOU SITTIN' THERE WITH A CHICKEN-SCRATCHIN' SMILE ON YOUR PAN FOR?? I GOT A GOOD MIND TO--
SHUDDUP! WHO SAYS YOU'VE GOT MIND?!! WHEN YOU TANGLE WITH ME, SMILEY, YOU'RE TANGLING WITH THE GOVERNMENT!
RICHARDS TOLD ME HE DIDN'T WANT YOU IN SAN GUSTO! BUT I'VE GOT THE AUTHORITY TO TAKE YOU THERE ANYWAY IF I WANT TO!
PERFECT! ONCE I HAVE ALL FOUR OF THEM IN SAN GUSTO, THINGS'LL REALLY START POPPIN'!
DON'T JUST STAND THERE, BUSTER! PACK YOUR TOOTHBRUSH! WE'RE LEAVIN' NOW!
YEAH! YOU CAN'T STOP US!
HE WOULDN'T DARE!

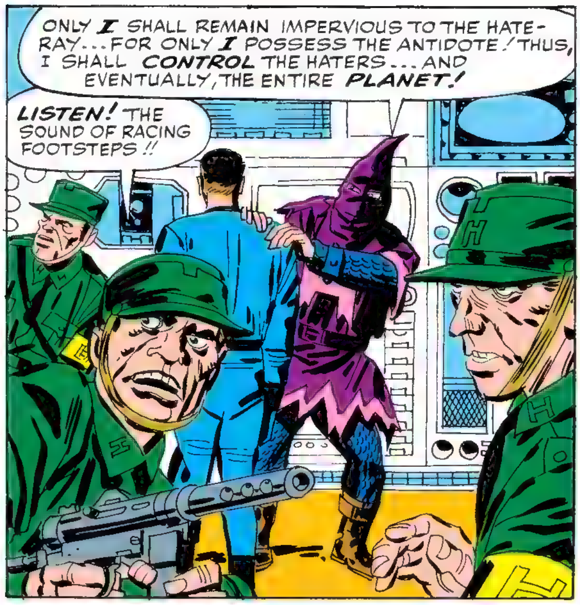

SECONDS LATER, WITH THE THING'S CAPABLE HANDS ON THE CONTROLS, THE FF's PERSONAL ICBM BLASTS OFF FROM THE BAXTER BUILDING'S BUILT-IN LAUNCH PAD...
THE THREE OF 'EM DON'T KNOW THEY'RE UNDER THE SPELL OF THE HATE-MONGER'S H-RAY! I'VE GOT TO FIND A WAY TO BEAT HIM BEFORE HE GETS THE WHOLE BLAMED HUMAN RACE UNDER HIS INFLUENCE!
4
BUT THE PLACE TO BEAT HIM IS IN SAN GUSTO, THE FIRST NATION HE'S OPENLY ATTACKING!
A SHORT TIME LATER, HIGH OVER THE ATLANTIC RANGE, THE MISSILE BOOSTER IS DISENGAGED...
...AND THE CAPSULE CONTAINING FURY AND HIS THREE CO-PASSENGERS, DROPS UNERRINGLY DOWN TO THE OUTSKIRTS OF SAN GUSTO --WHERE A STARTLING ADVENTURE AWAITS THEM!
MEANWHILE, OTHER EYES HAVE WITNESSED THE DEPARTURE OF THE FF's POGO PLANE AND ICBM... HOSTILE EYES-- MAD EYES--
THE ICBM VEERED TOWARD THE SOUTH! I WONDER...??
SIR! WE JUST RECEIVED A SHORT-WAVE RADIO REPORT FROM OUR MAIN BASE IN SAN GUSTO!
A STRANGE AIRBORNE CAPSULE WAS SEEN LANDING NEAR THE EASTERN SECTOR!
I SUSPECTED AS MUCH! IT SEEMS I DIDN'T GIVE THEM A STRONG ENOUGH DOSE OF THE H-RAY!
WE SHALL LEAVE FOR SAN GUSTO IMMEDIATELY! EVEN THOUGH UNDER MY SPELL, THE FANTASTIC FOUR ARE STILL TOO DANGEROUS TO IGNORE!
NOT ONE RESIDENT OF THE TEEMING CITY SUSPECTS THAT UNDER HIS FEET, AN ASTONISHING VEHICLE BEGINS TO BORE THRU THE EARTH AT UNBELIEVABLE SPEED! CONSISTING OF A ROCKET ENGINE WITH A PASSENGER NODULE, THE HATE-MONGER'S SUB-SURFACE MISSILE HEADS FOR SAN GUSTO!
EDITOR'S NOTE: THIS MACHINE IS NOT AS IMAGINARY AS IT MAY SEEM! IT IS REPORTED THAT EVEN NOW THE RUSSIANS ARE WORKING ON A SIMILAR VEHICLE, POWERED BY THE REVERSE THRUST OF A ROCKET ENGINE!

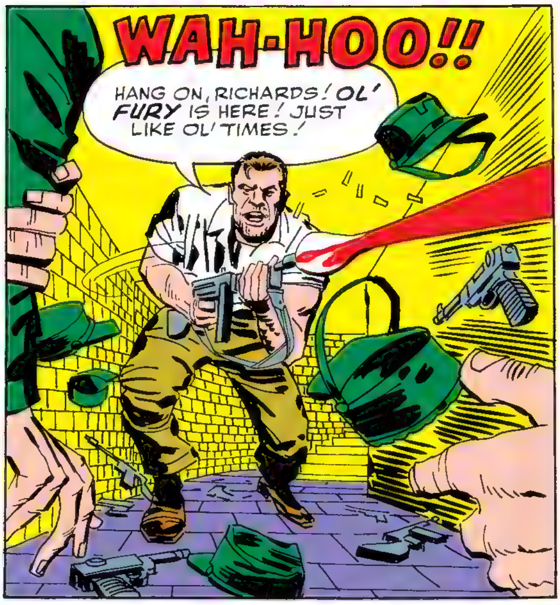

AT A PREDESTINED SPOT, THE ROCKET VEHICLE VEERS SHARPLY AND BLAZES ITS WAY DOWNWARD, UNTIL IT REACHES A SOFT, MOLTEN MASS OF EARTH...
THEN IT LEVELS OFF, ASSUMING A HORIZONTAL POSITION AGAIN, AS IT BLASTS ITS WAY SOUTH, UNDER THE MURKY BOTTOM OF THE SEA ABOVE...
FASTER! FASTER! WE MUST DESTROY THE FANTASTIC FOUR IN SAN GUSTO!
FINALLY, REACHING THEIR OBJECTIVE, THE MIGHTY MACHINE POINTS ITS NOSE SURFACEWARD, AND THEN...
COMING TO REST ON THE OUTSKIRTS OF SAN GUSTO, THICK STREAMS OF CHEMICAL COOLANT POUR FORTH FROM THE ROCKET, COOLING THE SURROUNDING TERRAIN WHICH HAS BECOME WHITE HOT BECAUSE OF THE POWERFUL MISSILE'S THRUST!
4
WITHIN THE HOUR, WE SHALL BE ABLE TO SET FOOT ON THE GROUND AGAIN!
NEXT TIME I MEET THE FANTASTIC FOUR, I SHALL BE SURE TO GIVE THEM A LETHAL DOSE OF MY HATE GAS! THERE MUST BE NO MORE SLIP-UPS SUCH AS THIS!
AND THEN, AFTER THE GROUND HAS COOLED...
FOLLOW ME! WE MUST RACE TO THE UNDERGROUND COMMAND POST AND PREPARE FOR THE ATTACK BY THE FANTASTIC FOUR WHICH IS CERTAIN TO COME!
MEANWHILE, SOME DISTANCE AWAY, THE REBEL FORCES ARE GATHERING LARGE ARTILLERY SHELLS FOR THEIR ASSAULT UPON THE SAN GUSTO GOVERNMENT...
EVERYTHING GOES OUR WAY! SOON WE SHALL CONTROL SAN GUSTO!
THAT IS ENOUGH SHELLS FOR NOW! LET US REJOIN OUR FORCES!

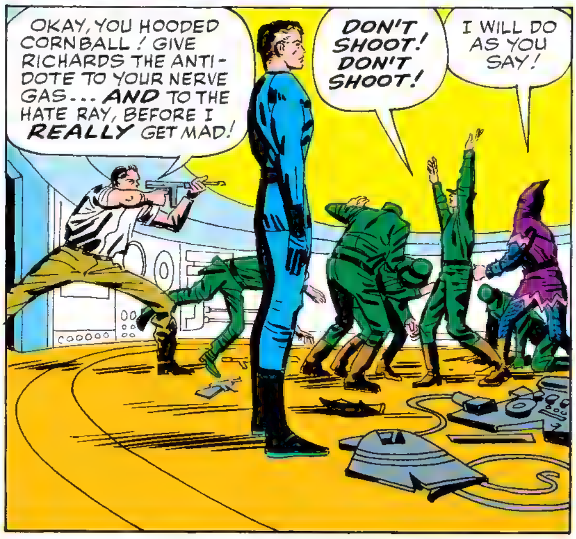

BUT, NO SOONER DO THE REBEL FORCES DEPART, WHEN A LONG BLUE-CLAD ARM STRETCHES OUT INCREDIBLY FROM THE UNDERBRUSH, AND...
ONE STICK OF *T.N.T.* IS ALL I WILL NEED!
THAT'S SURE TO SLOW DOWN THE REVOLUTIONARY FORCES FOR A WHILE, UNTIL I CAN THINK UP SOME *OTHER* LITTLE STUNTS!
MINUTES LATER, MR. FANTASTIC SPIES A LOW-FLYING REBEL ROCKET PLANE...
LUCKY HE'S FLYING LOW, TO DODGE THE GOVERNMENT RADAR! BUT HE CAN'T DODGE *ME!*
I'D LIKE TO BE THERE TO SEE HIS FACE WHEN THE PILOT PRESSES THE ROCKET RELEASE BUTTON!
WHAT A FOOL I WAS TO WASTE ALL THOSE DAYS WITH MY THREE USELESS EX-PARTNERS! I REALIZE NOW THAT THEY DID NOTHING BUT CRAMP MY STYLE!
AND SHORTLY THEREAFTER...
IT IS A MOST STRANGE THING! THIS SMOOTH JUNGLE ROAD WAS NOT HERE THIS MORNING! WHO COULD HAVE BUILT IT?
WHAT DOES THAT MATTER? SEE HOW IT HELPS US INFILTRATE TOWARDS THE CAPITOL!

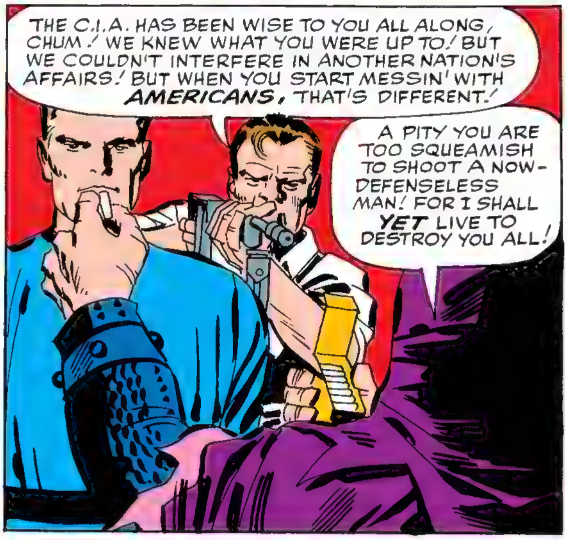

BUT SUDDENLY, THE MYSTERIOUS "ROAD" BEGINS TO HEAVE AND SWELL, AS THOUGH IMBUED WITH A LIFE OF ITS OWN!
HERE'S ONE SQUAD OF REBELS THAT WON'T BE BACK FOR A WHILE!
FLEE FOR YOUR LIVES! THE ROAD IS BEWITCHED!
MADRE DIOS! RUN! RUN! WE ARE DOOMED!
IT WAS OBLIGING OF THEM TO LEAVE THEIR GUNS BEHIND!
HERE ARE A FEW MORE THAT WILL NEVER BE USED AGAINST SAN GUSTO!
HEAD FOR THE BORDER IF YOU VALUE YOUR LIVES!
UP TILL NOW, ALL I'VE DONE HAS BEEN KID STUFF!
IT'S TIME I BUCKLED DOWN AND REALLY GAVE A LITTLE DEMONSTRATION OF WHAT MR. FANTASTIC CAN DO WHEN HE'S FIGHTING MAD!
4
AND THEN, WHILE PLANNING HIS NEXT MOVE, REED RICHARDS MAKES A FATEFUL DISCOVERY...
A RAY MACHINE OF SOME SORT! SENDING HIGH-POTENCY BEAMS INTO THE AIR!
THE MAIN SECTION IS BURIED BELOW GROUND! I'LL JUST REACH DOWN AND PROBE FOR ITS SOURCE OF POWER!

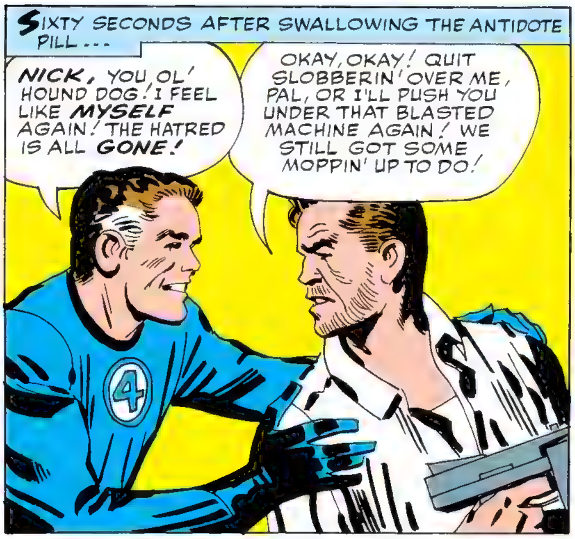

SECONDS LATER, THE COSTUMED CRUSADER DISCOVERS A HIDDEN PASSAGEWAY, LEADING TO A DARK UNDERGROUND CHAMBER...
THERE'S MORE TO THIS REVOLUTION THAN MEETS THE EYE... AND I SUSPECT I'LL FIND THE ANSWER DOWN THERE!
STRANGE... I CAN HEAR A PULSATING THROB THROUGH THIS WALL... LIKE THE DEEP, INCESSANT HUM OF SOME MIGHTY MACHINE!
AND THEN, WITHOUT WARNING...
NERVE GAS VAPORS! CAN'T ESCAPE! I-I'M TRAPPED!
WE GOT HIM!!
IN A SEMI-PARALYZED STATE, DUE TO THE POTENT NERVE GAS, REED IS BROUGHT FACE TO FACE WITH THE HATE-MONGER ONCE MORE!
I KNEW IT WAS ONLY A MATTER OF TIME BEFORE YOU'D STUMBLE ACROSS MY HATE-RAY MACHINE!
AND NOW THAT YOU ARE TRAPPED, I SHALL SHOW YOU THE FATE THAT AWAITS MANKIND, BEFORE I HAVE YOU DESTROYED!
OBSERVE HOW MY HATE-RAY MACHINE DERIVES ITS MATCHLESS POWER BY BOUNCING A BEAM TO THE MOON AND BACK... A BEAM WHICH CAN REACH ANY PLACE ON EARTH!
NO WONDER EARTH'S TIDES WERE ABNORMAL LATELY! THE HATE-MONGER HAS BEEN AFFECTING THE MOON'S GRAVITATIONAL PULL!
THIS SMALL, PITIFUL NATION WAS JUST A TEST FOR ME! NOW THAT I SEE HOW EFFECTIVE MY HATE RAY IS, I SHALL BLANKET THE WORLD WITH IT! I SHALL TURN FRIEND AGAINST FRIEND, NEIGHBOR AGAINST NEIGHBOR!
JUST AS HE TURNED THE FANTASTIC FOUR AGAINST EACH OTHER! BUT... WHAT IS HIS PURPOSE?? WHO IS HE??

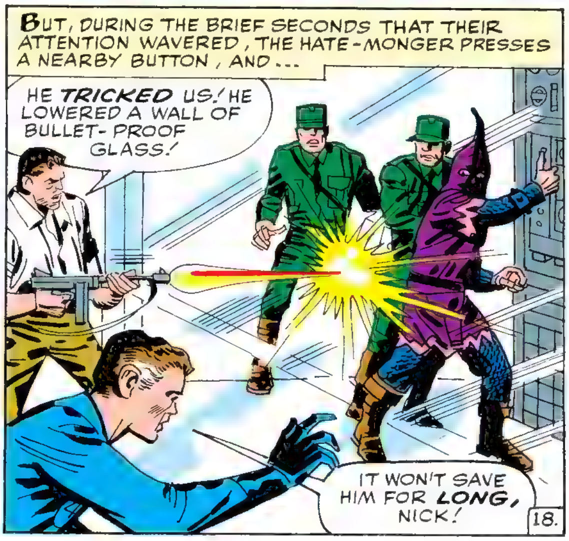

ONLY *I* SHALL REMAIN IMPERVIOUS TO THE HATE-RAY... FOR ONLY *I* POSSESS THE ANTIDOTE! THUS, I SHALL ***CONTROL*** THE HATERS... AND EVENTUALLY, THE ENTIRE ***PLANET!***
LISTEN! THE SOUND OF RACING FOOTSTEPS!!

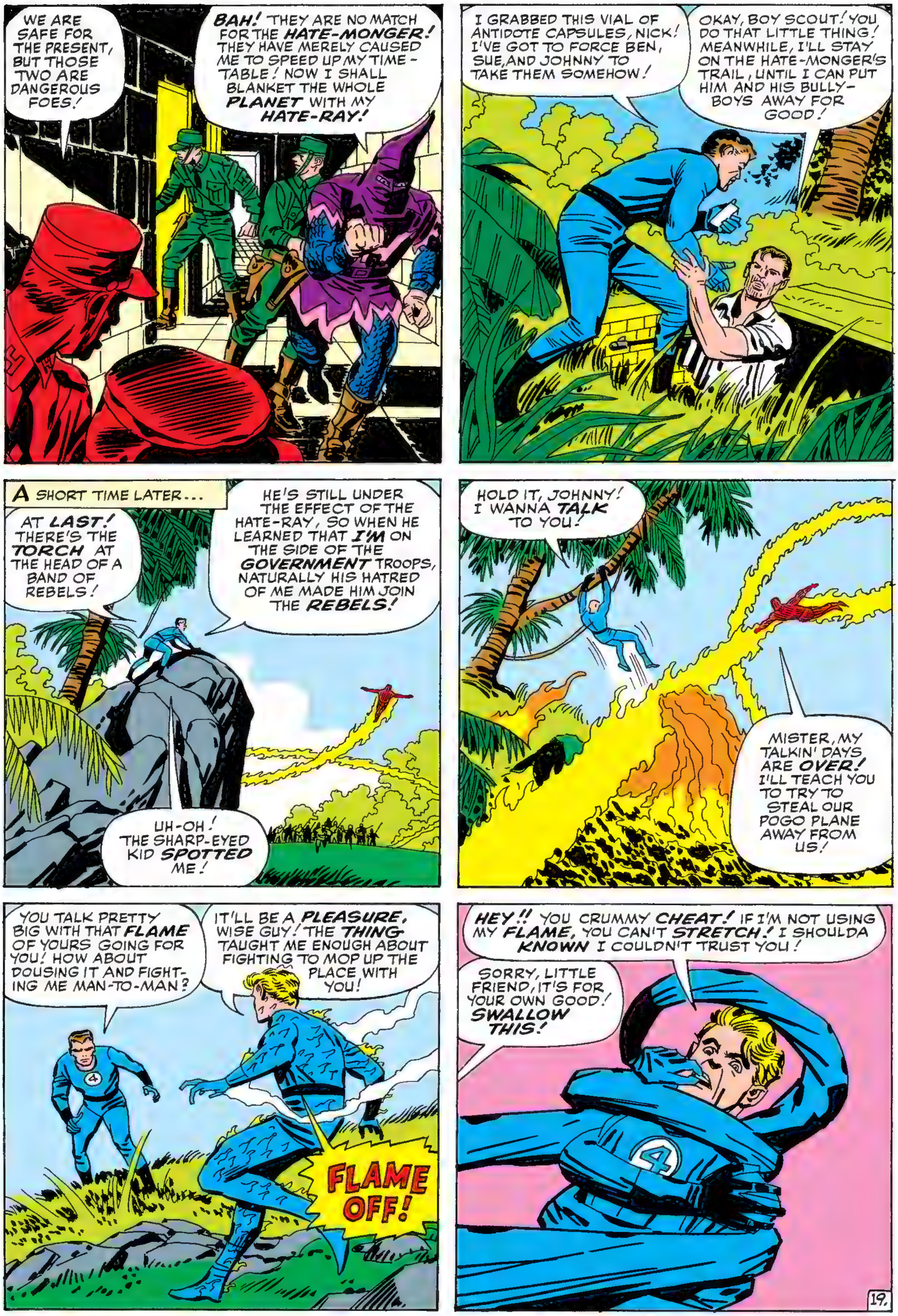

WAH-HOO!!
HANG ON, RICHARDS! ***OL' FURY*** IS HERE! JUST LIKE OL' TIMES!

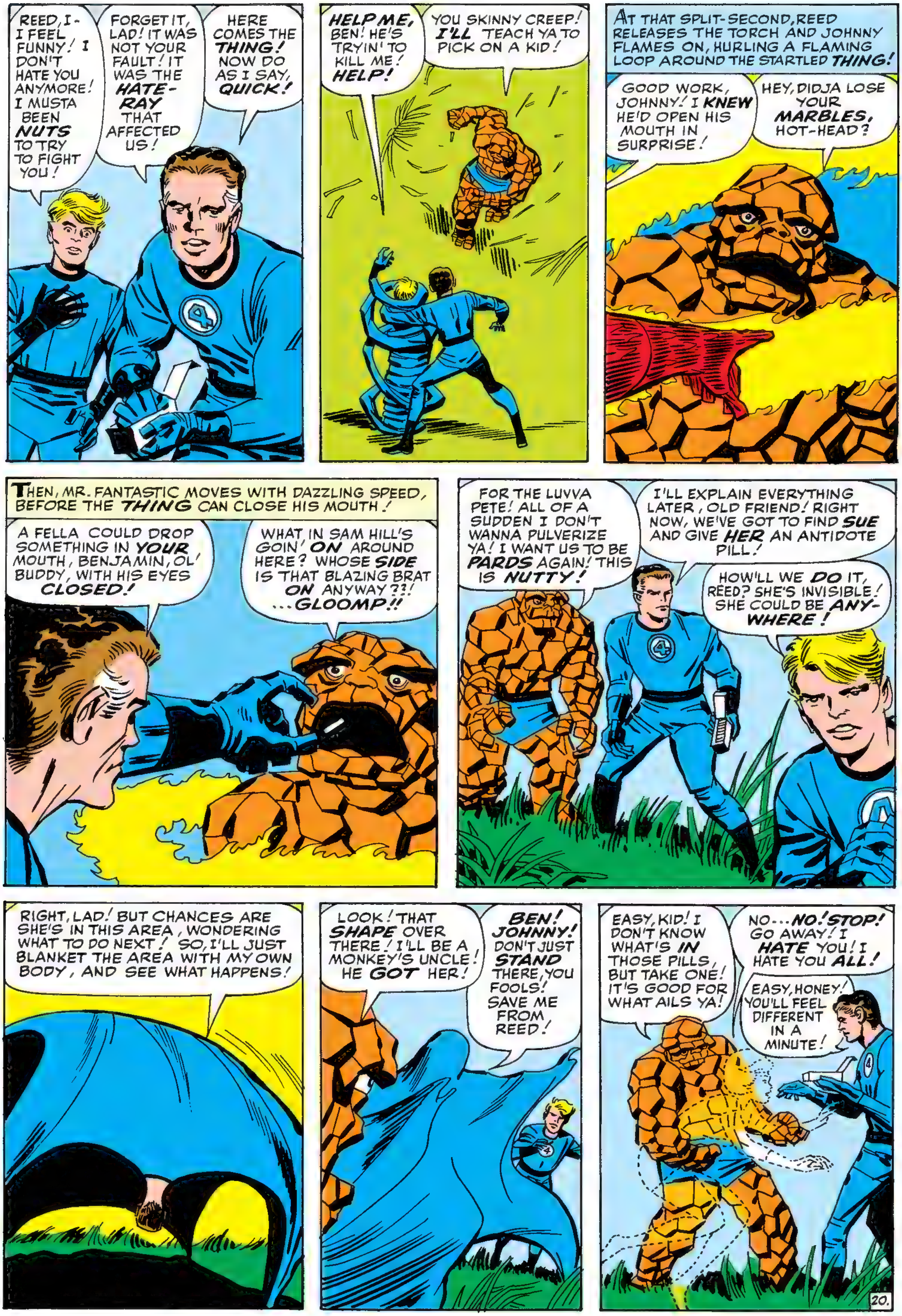

OKAY, YOU HOODED CORNBALL! GIVE RICHARDS THE ANTI-DOTE TO YOUR NERVE GAS... ***AND*** TO THE HATE RAY, BEFORE I ***REALLY*** GET MAD!
DON'T SHOOT! DON'T SHOOT!
I WILL DO AS YOU SAY!

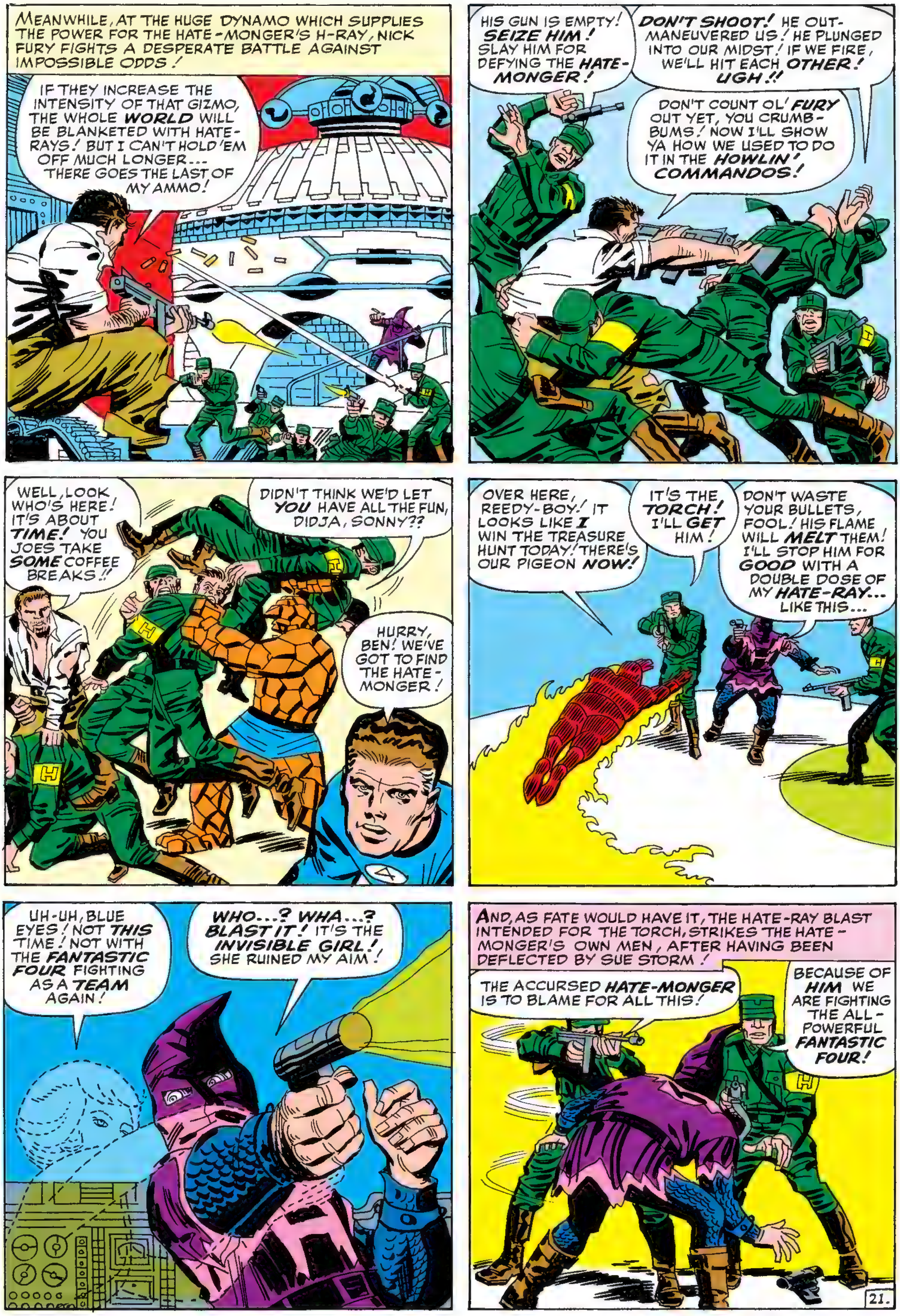

THE C.I.A. HAS BEEN WISE TO YOU ALL ALONG, CHUM! WE KNEW WHAT YOU WERE UP TO! BUT WE COULDN'T INTERFERE IN ANOTHER NATION'S AFFAIRS! BUT WHEN YOU START MESSIN' WITH ***AMERICANS,*** THAT'S DIFFERENT!
A PITY YOU ARE TOO SQUEAMISH TO SHOOT A NOW-DEFENSELESS MAN! FOR I SHALL ***YET*** LIVE TO DESTROY YOU ALL!

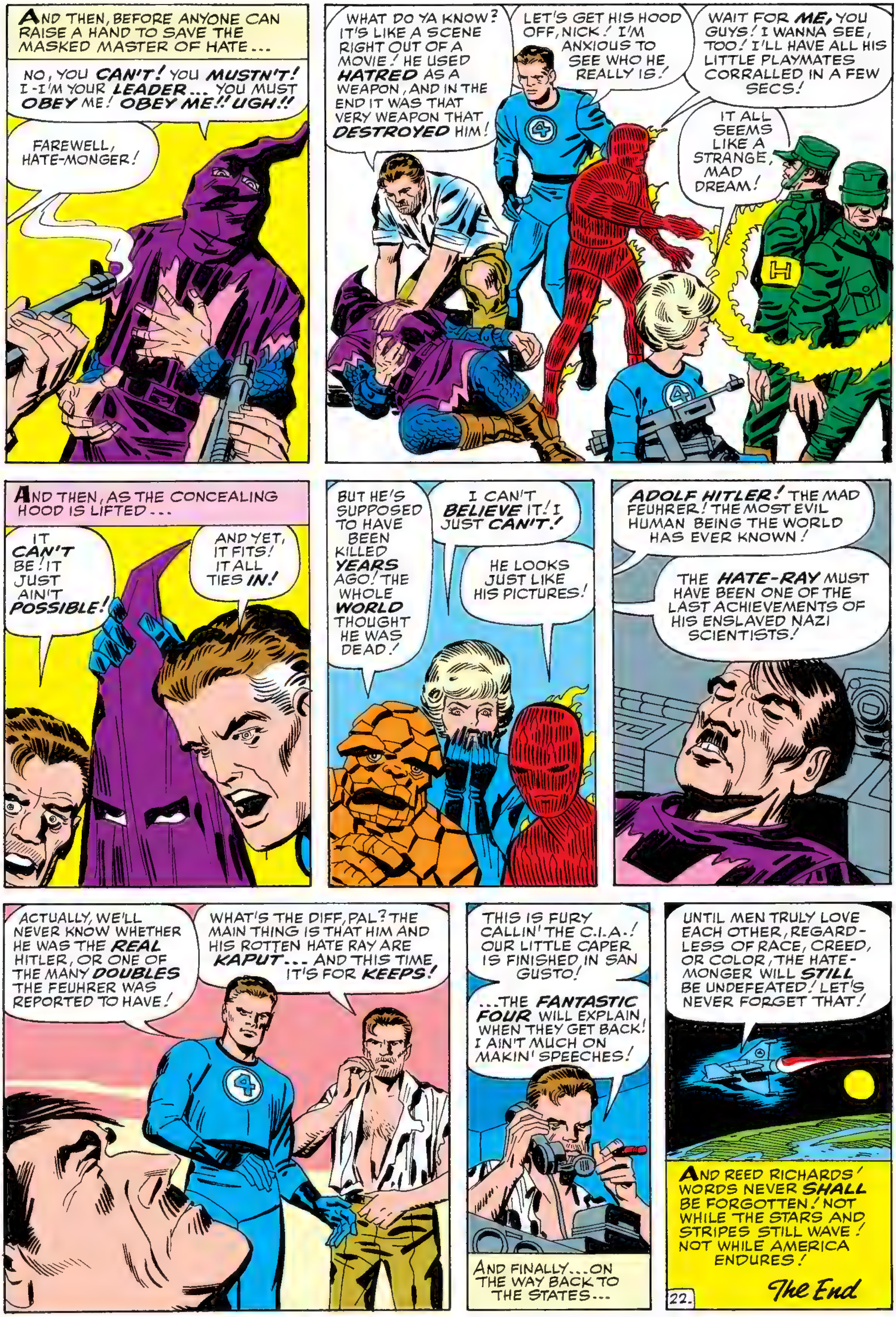

SIXTY SECONDS AFTER SWALLOWING THE ANTIDOTE PILL...
NICK, YOU OL' HOUND DOG! I FEEL LIKE ***MYSELF*** AGAIN! THE HATRED IS ALL ***GONE!***
OKAY, OKAY! QUIT SLOBBERIN' OVER ME, PAL, OR I'LL PUSH YOU UNDER THAT BLASTED MACHINE AGAIN! WE STILL GOT SOME MOPPIN' UP TO DO!

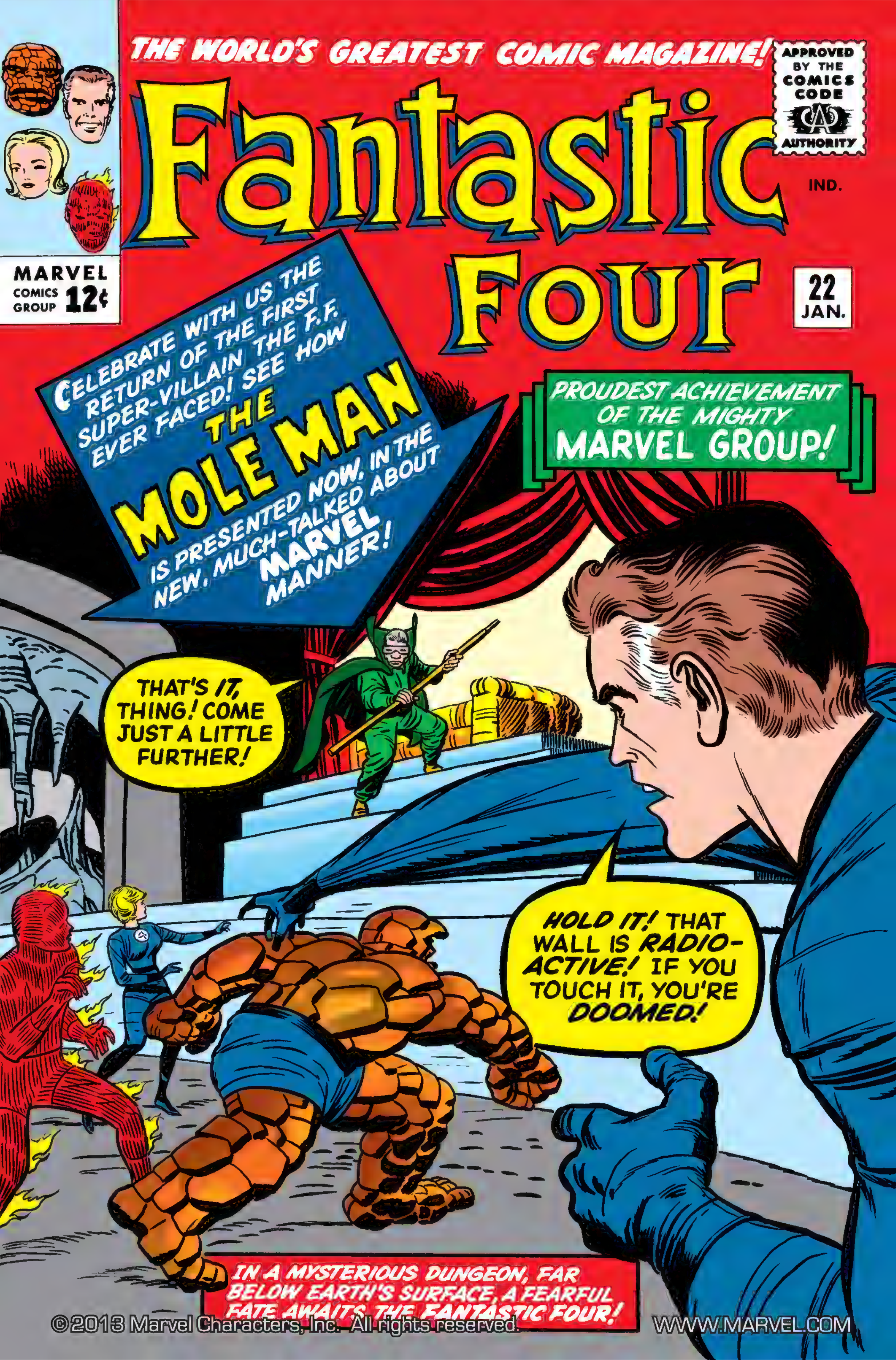

BUT, DURING THE BRIEF SECONDS THAT THEIR ATTENTION WAVERED, THE HATE-MONGER PRESSES A NEARBY BUTTON, AND...
HE ***TRICKED*** US! HE LOWERED A WALL OF BULLET-PROOF GLASS!
IT WON'T SAVE HIM FOR ***LONG,*** NICK!


WE ARE SAFE FOR THE PRESENT, BUT THOSE TWO ARE DANGEROUS FOES!
BAH! THEY ARE NO MATCH FOR THE HATE-MONGER! THEY HAVE MERELY CAUSED ME TO SPEED UP MY TIME-TABLE! NOW I SHALL BLANKET THE WHOLE PLANET WITH MY HATE-RAY!
I GRABBED THIS VIAL OF ANTIDOTE CAPSULES, NICK! I'VE GOT TO FORCE BEN, SUE, AND JOHNNY TO TAKE THEM SOMEHOW!
OKAY, BOY SCOUT! YOU DO THAT LITTLE THING! MEANWHILE, I'LL STAY ON THE HATE-MONGER'S TRAIL, UNTIL I CAN PUT HIM AND HIS BULLY-BOYS AWAY FOR GOOD!
A SHORT TIME LATER...
AT LAST! THERE'S THE TORCH AT THE HEAD OF A BAND OF REBELS!
HE'S STILL UNDER THE EFFECT OF THE HATE-RAY, SO WHEN HE LEARNED THAT I'M ON THE SIDE OF THE GOVERNMENT TROOPS, NATURALLY HIS HATRED OF ME MADE HIM JOIN THE REBELS!
UH-OH! THE SHARP-EYED KID SPOTTED ME!
HOLD IT, JOHNNY! I WANNA TALK TO YOU!
MISTER, MY TALKIN' DAYS ARE OVER! I'LL TEACH YOU TO TRY TO STEAL OUR POGO PLANE AWAY FROM US!
YOU TALK PRETTY BIG WITH THAT FLAME OF YOURS GOING FOR YOU! HOW ABOUT DOUSING IT AND FIGHTING ME MAN-TO-MAN?
IT'LL BE A PLEASURE, WISE GUY! THE THING TAUGHT ME ENOUGH ABOUT FIGHTING TO MOP UP THE PLACE WITH YOU!
FLAME OFF!
HEY!! YOU CRUMMY CHEAT! IF I'M NOT USING MY FLAME, YOU CAN'T STRETCH! I SHOULDA KNOWN I COULDN'T TRUST YOU!
SORRY, LITTLE FRIEND, IT'S FOR YOUR OWN GOOD! SWALLOW THIS!
4


REED, I-- I FEEL FUNNY! I DON'T HATE YOU ANYMORE! I MUSTA BEEN NUTS TO TRY TO FIGHT YOU!
FORGET IT, LAD! IT WAS NOT YOUR FAULT! IT WAS THE HATE-RAY THAT AFFECTED US!
HERE COMES THE THING! NOW DO AS I SAY, QUICK!
HELP ME, BEN! HE'S TRYIN' TO KILL ME! HELP!
YOU SKINNY CREEP! I'LL TEACH YA TO PICK ON A KID!
AT THAT SPLIT-SECOND, REED RELEASES THE TORCH AND JOHNNY FLAMES ON, HURLING A FLAMING LOOP AROUND THE STARTLED THING!
GOOD WORK, JOHNNY! I KNEW HE'D OPEN HIS MOUTH IN SURPRISE!
HEY, DIDJA LOSE YOUR MARBLES, HOT-HEAD?
THEN, MR. FANTASTIC MOVES WITH DAZZLING SPEED, BEFORE THE THING CAN CLOSE HIS MOUTH!
A FELLA COULD DROP SOMETHING IN YOUR MOUTH, BENJAMIN, OL' BUDDY, WITH HIS EYES CLOSED!
WHAT IN SAM HILL'S GOIN' ON AROUND HERE? WHOSE SIDE IS THAT BLAZING BRAT ON ANYWAY?!! ...GLOOMP!!
FOR THE LUVVA PETE! ALL OF A SUDDEN I DON'T WANNA PULVERIZE YA! I WANT US TO BE PARDS AGAIN! THIS IS NUTTY!
I'LL EXPLAIN EVERYTHING LATER, OLD FRIEND! RIGHT NOW, WE'VE GOT TO FIND SUE AND GIVE HER AN ANTIDOTE PILL!
HOW'LL WE DO IT, REED? SHE'S INVISIBLE! SHE COULD BE ANYWHERE!
RIGHT, LAD! BUT CHANCES ARE SHE'S IN THIS AREA, WONDERING WHAT TO DO NEXT! SO, I'LL JUST BLANKET THE AREA WITH MY OWN BODY, AND SEE WHAT HAPPENS!
LOOK! THAT SHAPE OVER THERE! I'LL BE A MONKEY'S UNCLE! HE GOT HER!
BEN! JOHNNY! DON'T JUST STAND THERE, YOU FOOLS! SAVE ME FROM REED!
EASY, KID! I DON'T KNOW WHAT'S IN THOSE PILLS, BUT TAKE ONE! IT'S GOOD FOR WHAT AILS YA!
NO...NO! STOP! GO AWAY! I HATE YOU! I HATE YOU ALL!
EASY, HONEY! YOU'LL FEEL DIFFERENT IN A MINUTE!


MEANWHILE, AT THE HUGE DYNAMO WHICH SUPPLIES THE POWER FOR THE HATE-MONGER'S H-RAY, NICK FURY FIGHTS A DESPERATE BATTLE AGAINST IMPOSSIBLE ODDS!
IF THEY INCREASE THE INTENSITY OF THAT GIZMO, THE WHOLE WORLD WILL BE BLANKETED WITH HATE-RAYS! BUT I CAN'T HOLD 'EM OFF MUCH LONGER... THERE GOES THE LAST OF MY AMMO!
HIS GUN IS EMPTY! SEIZE HIM! SLAY HIM FOR DEFYING THE HATE-MONGER!
DON'T SHOOT! HE OUT-MANEUVERED US! HE PLUNGED INTO OUR MIDST! IF WE FIRE, WE'LL HIT EACH OTHER! UGH!!
DON'T COUNT OL' FURY OUT YET, YOU CRUMB-BUMS! NOW I'LL SHOW YA HOW WE USED TO DO IT IN THE HOWLIN' COMMANDOS!
WELL, LOOK WHO'S HERE! IT'S ABOUT TIME! YOU JOES TAKE SOME COFFEE BREAKS!!
DIDN'T THINK WE'D LET YOU HAVE ALL THE FUN, DIDJA, SONNY??
HURRY, BEN! WE'VE GOT TO FIND THE HATE-MONGER!
OVER HERE, REEDY-BOY! IT LOOKS LIKE I WIN THE TREASURE HUNT TODAY! THERE'S OUR PIGEON NOW!
IT'S THE TORCH! I'LL GET HIM!
DON'T WASTE YOUR BULLETS, FOOL! HIS FLAME WILL MELT THEM! I'LL STOP HIM FOR GOOD WITH A DOUBLE DOSE OF MY HATE-RAY... LIKE THIS...
UH-UH, BLUE EYES! NOT THIS TIME! NOT WITH THE FANTASTIC FOUR FIGHTING AS A TEAM AGAIN!
WHO...? WHA...? BLAST IT! IT'S THE INVISIBLE GIRL! SHE RUINED MY AIM!
AND, AS FATE WOULD HAVE IT, THE HATE-RAY BLAST INTENDED FOR THE TORCH, STRIKES THE HATE-MONGER'S OWN MEN, AFTER HAVING BEEN DEFLECTED BY SUE STORM!
THE ACCURSED HATE-MONGER IS TO BLAME FOR ALL THIS!
BECAUSE OF HIM WE ARE FIGHTING THE ALL-POWERFUL FANTASTIC FOUR!


AND THEN, BEFORE ANYONE CAN RAISE A HAND TO SAVE THE MASKED MASTER OF HATE...
NO, YOU CAN'T! YOU MUSTN'T! I-I'M YOUR LEADER... YOU MUST OBEY ME! OBEY ME!! UGH!!
FAREWELL, HATE-MONGER!
WHAT DO YA KNOW? IT'S LIKE A SCENE RIGHT OUT OF A MOVIE! HE USED HATRED AS A WEAPON, AND IN THE END IT WAS THAT VERY WEAPON THAT DESTROYED HIM!
LET'S GET HIS HOOD OFF, NICK! I'M ANXIOUS TO SEE WHO HE REALLY IS!
WAIT FOR ME, YOU GUYS! I WANNA SEE, TOO! I'LL HAVE ALL HIS LITTLE PLAYMATES CORRALLED IN A FEW SECS!
IT ALL SEEMS LIKE A STRANGE, MAD DREAM!
H
AND THEN, AS THE CONCEALING HOOD IS LIFTED...
IT CAN'T BE! IT JUST AIN'T POSSIBLE!
AND YET, IT FITS! IT ALL TIES IN!
BUT HE'S SUPPOSED TO HAVE BEEN KILLED YEARS AGO! THE WHOLE WORLD THOUGHT HE WAS DEAD!
I CAN'T BELIEVE IT! I JUST CAN'T!
HE LOOKS JUST LIKE HIS PICTURES!
ADOLF HITLER! THE MAD FEUHRER! THE MOST EVIL HUMAN BEING THE WORLD HAS EVER KNOWN!
THE HATE-RAY MUST HAVE BEEN ONE OF THE LAST ACHIEVEMENTS OF HIS ENSLAVED NAZI SCIENTISTS!
ACTUALLY, WE'LL NEVER KNOW WHETHER HE WAS THE REAL HITLER, OR ONE OF THE MANY DOUBLES THE FEUHRER WAS REPORTED TO HAVE!
WHAT'S THE DIFF, PAL? THE MAIN THING IS THAT HIM AND HIS ROTTEN HATE RAY ARE KAPUT... AND THIS TIME, IT'S FOR KEEPS!
THIS IS FURY CALLIN' THE C.I.A.! OUR LITTLE CAPER IS FINISHED IN SAN GUSTO!
...THE FANTASTIC FOUR WILL EXPLAIN WHEN THEY GET BACK! I AIN'T MUCH ON MAKIN' SPEECHES!
AND FINALLY... ON THE WAY BACK TO THE STATES...
UNTIL MEN TRULY LOVE EACH OTHER, REGARDLESS OF RACE, CREED, OR COLOR, THE HATE-MONGER WILL STILL BE UNDEFEATED! LET'S NEVER FORGET THAT!
AND REED RICHARDS' WORDS NEVER SHALL BE FORGOTTEN! NOT WHILE THE STARS AND STRIPES STILL WAVE! NOT WHILE AMERICA ENDURES!
The End


THE WORLD'S GREATEST COMIC MAGAZINE!
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
Fantastic Four
IND.
MARVEL COMICS GROUP 12¢
22 JAN.
CELEBRATE WITH US THE RETURN OF THE FIRST SUPER-VILLAIN THE F.F. EVER FACED! SEE HOW THE MOLE MAN IS PRESENTED NOW, IN THE NEW, MUCH-TALKED ABOUT MARVEL MANNER!
PROUDEST ACHIEVEMENT OF THE MIGHTY MARVEL GROUP!
THAT'S IT, THING! COME JUST A LITTLE FURTHER!
HOLD IT! THAT WALL IS RADIO-ACTIVE! IF YOU TOUCH IT, YOU'RE DOOMED!
IN A MYSTERIOUS DUNGEON, FAR BELOW EARTH'S SURFACE, A FEARFUL FATE AWAITS THE FANTASTIC FOUR!

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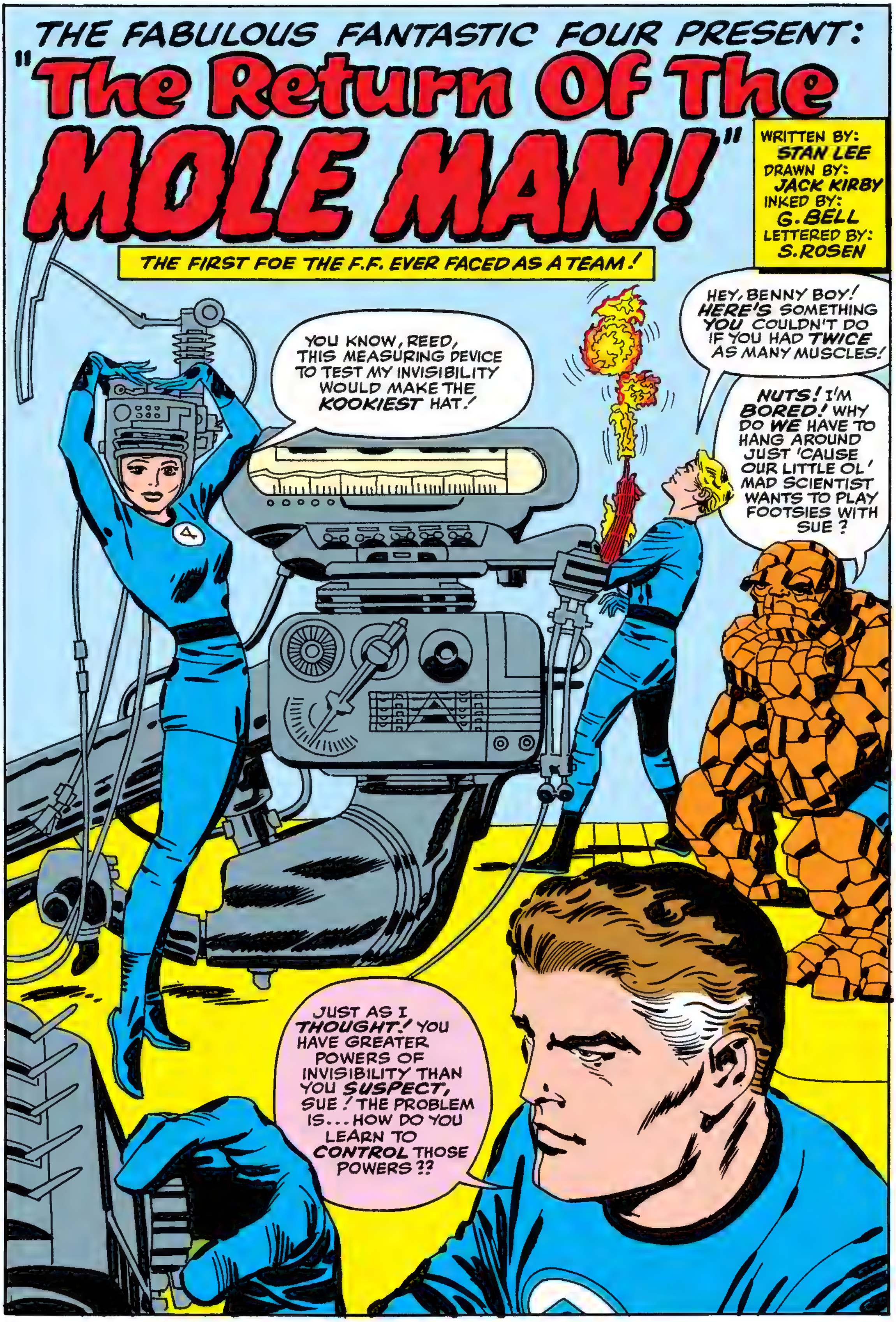
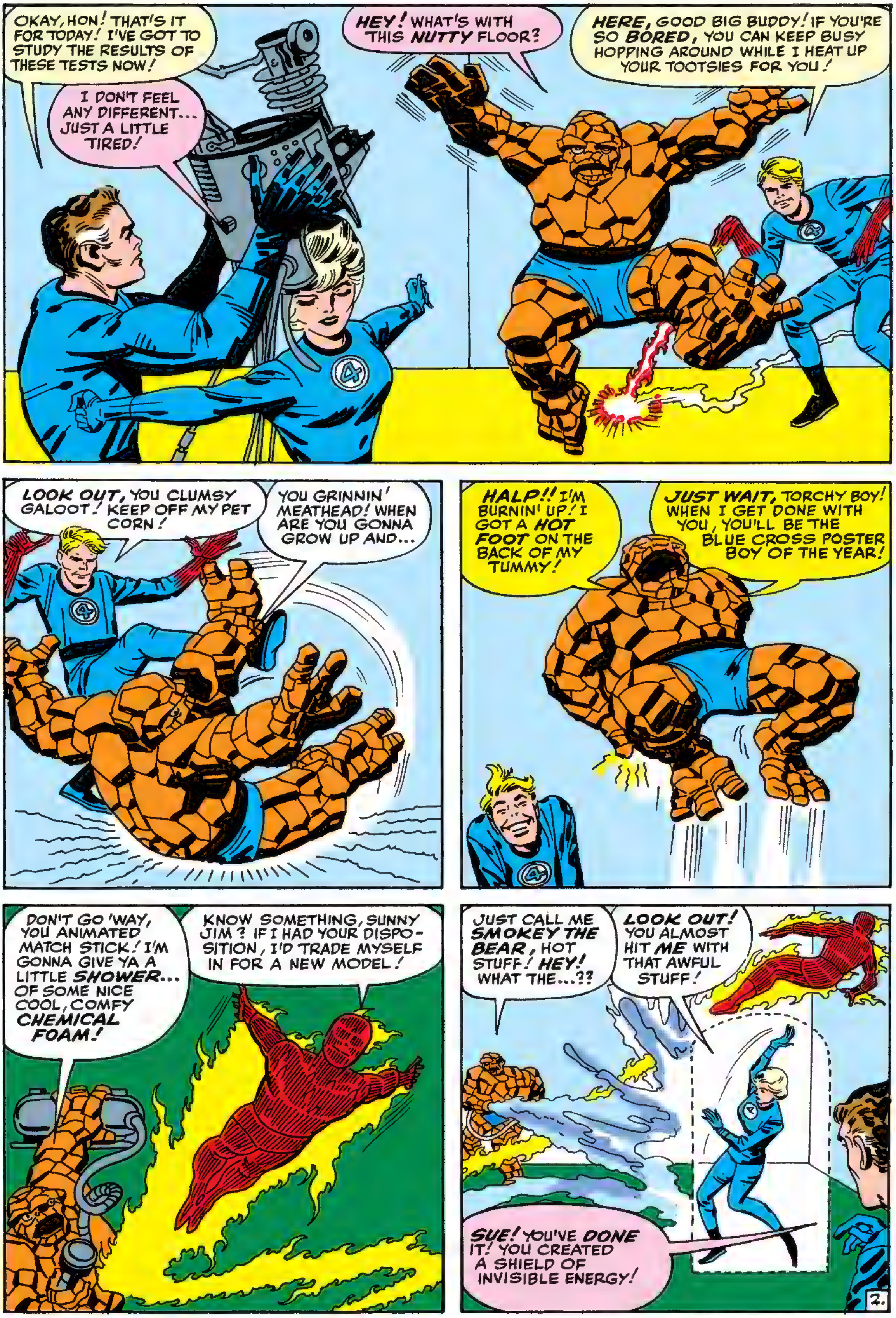

THE FABULOUS FANTASTIC FOUR PRESENT:
"The Return Of The MOLE MAN!"
WRITTEN BY: STAN LEE
DRAWN BY: JACK KIRBY
INKED BY: G. BELL
LETTERED BY: S. ROSEN
THE FIRST FOE THE F.F. EVER FACED AS A TEAM!
YOU KNOW, REED, THIS MEASURING DEVICE TO TEST MY INVISIBILITY WOULD MAKE THE *KOOKIEST* HAT!
HEY, BENNY BOY! *HERE'S* SOMETHING *YOU* COULDN'T DO IF YOU HAD *TWICE* AS MANY MUSCLES!
NUTS! I'M *BORED!* WHY DO *WE* HAVE TO HANG AROUND JUST 'CAUSE OUR LITTLE OL' MAD SCIENTIST WANTS TO PLAY FOOTSIES WITH SUE?
JUST AS I *THOUGHT!* YOU HAVE GREATER POWERS OF INVISIBILITY THAN YOU *SUSPECT,* SUE! THE PROBLEM IS... HOW DO YOU LEARN TO *CONTROL* THOSE POWERS??


OKAY, HON! THAT'S IT FOR TODAY! I'VE GOT TO STUDY THE RESULTS OF THESE TESTS NOW!
I DON'T FEEL ANY DIFFERENT... JUST A LITTLE TIRED!
HEY! WHAT'S WITH THIS NUTTY FLOOR?
HERE, GOOD BIG BUDDY! IF YOU'RE SO BORED, YOU CAN KEEP BUSY HOPPING AROUND WHILE I HEAT UP YOUR TOOTSIES FOR YOU!
LOOK OUT, YOU CLUMSY GALOOT! KEEP OFF MY PET CORN!
YOU GRINNIN' MEATHEAD! WHEN ARE YOU GONNA GROW UP AND...
HALP!! I'M BURNIN' UP! I GOT A HOT FOOT ON THE BACK OF MY TUMMY!
JUST WAIT, TORCHY BOY! WHEN I GET DONE WITH YOU, YOU'LL BE THE BLUE CROSS POSTER BOY OF THE YEAR!
DON'T GO 'WAY, YOU ANIMATED MATCH STICK! I'M GONNA GIVE YA A LITTLE SHOWER... OF SOME NICE COOL, COMFY CHEMICAL FOAM!
KNOW SOMETHING, SUNNY JIM? IF I HAD YOUR DISPOSITION, I'D TRADE MYSELF IN FOR A NEW MODEL!
JUST CALL ME SMOKEY THE BEAR, HOT STUFF! HEY! WHAT THE...??
LOOK OUT! YOU ALMOST HIT ME WITH THAT AWFUL STUFF!
SUE! YOU'VE DONE IT! YOU CREATED A SHIELD OF INVISIBLE ENERGY!
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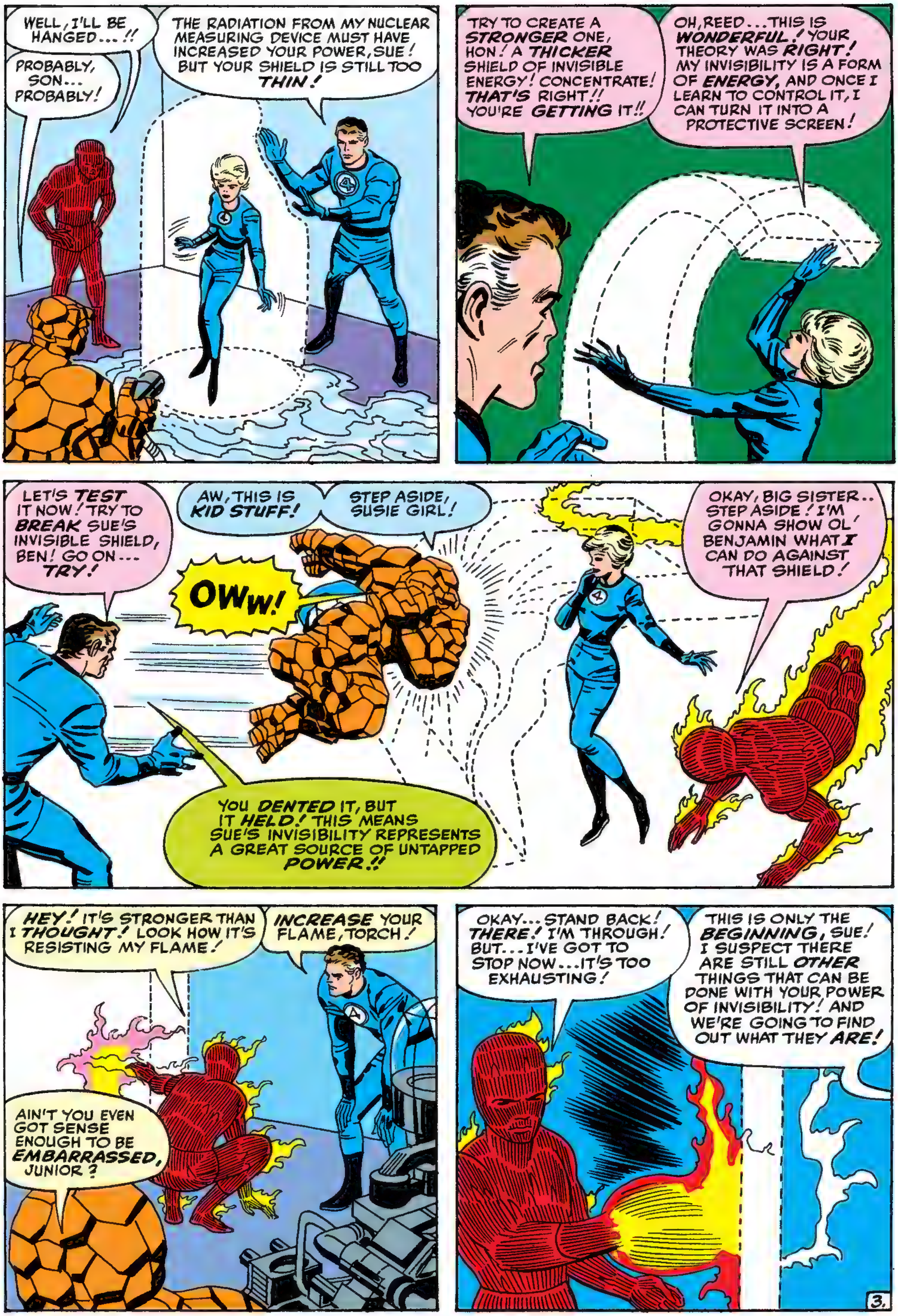
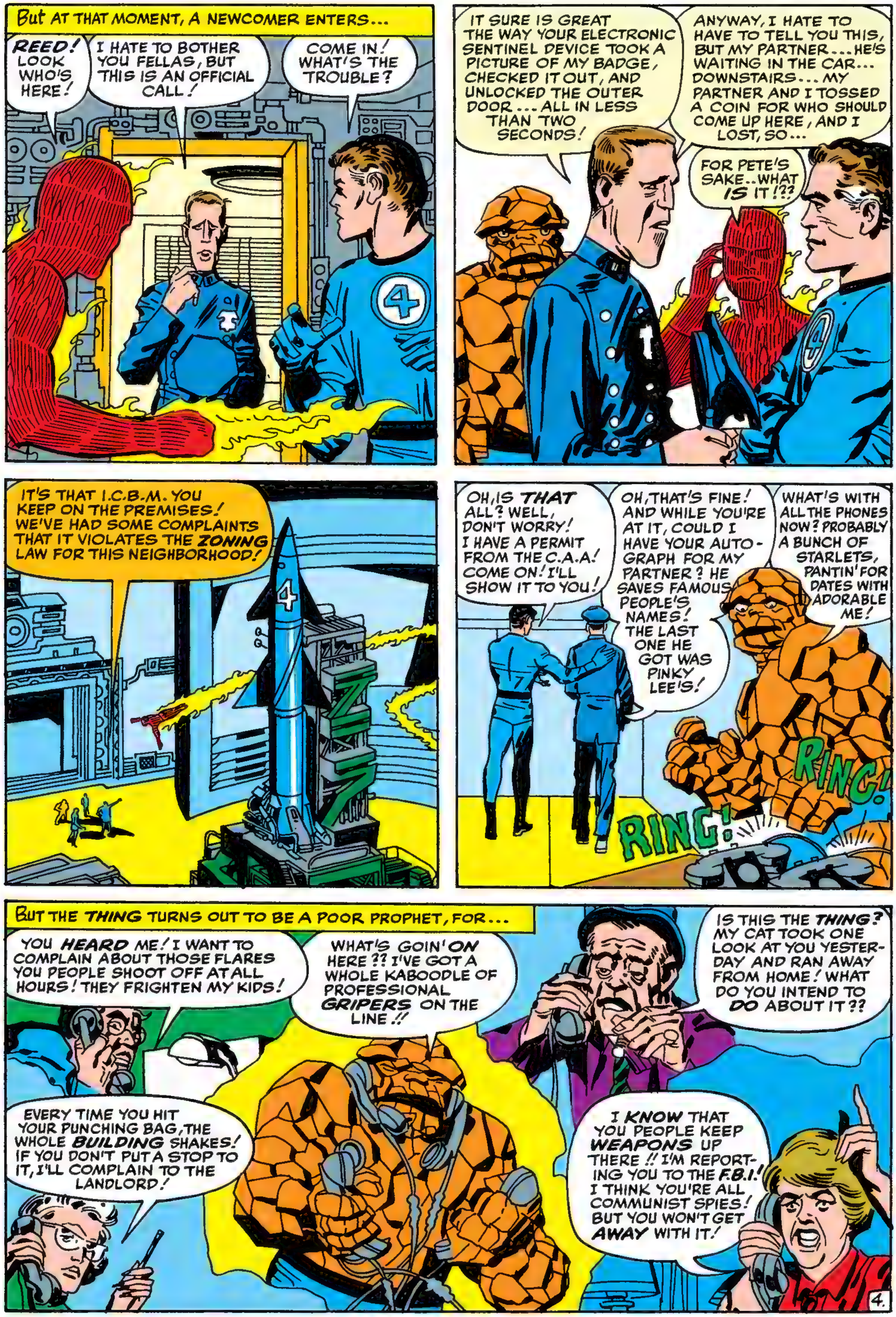
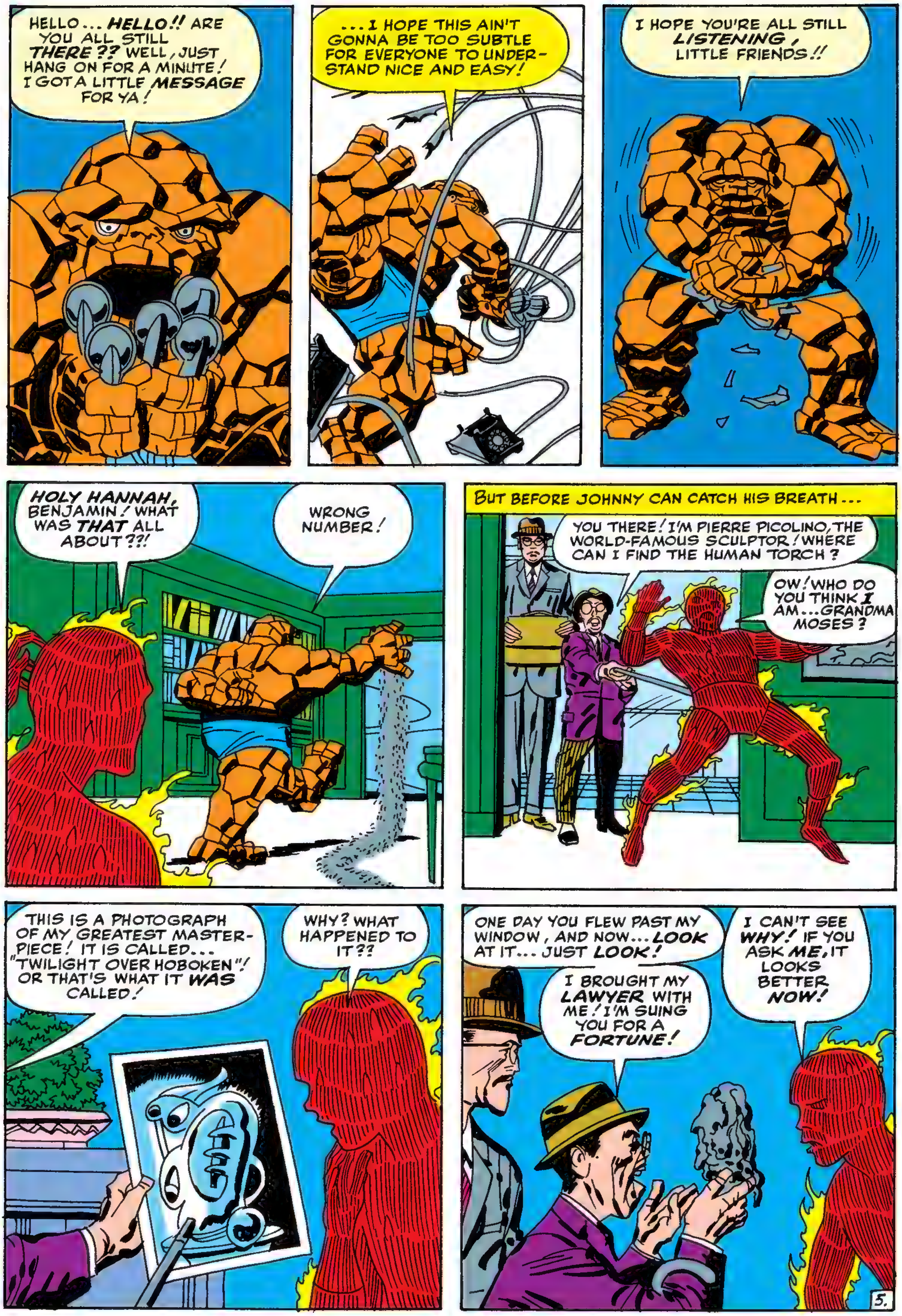
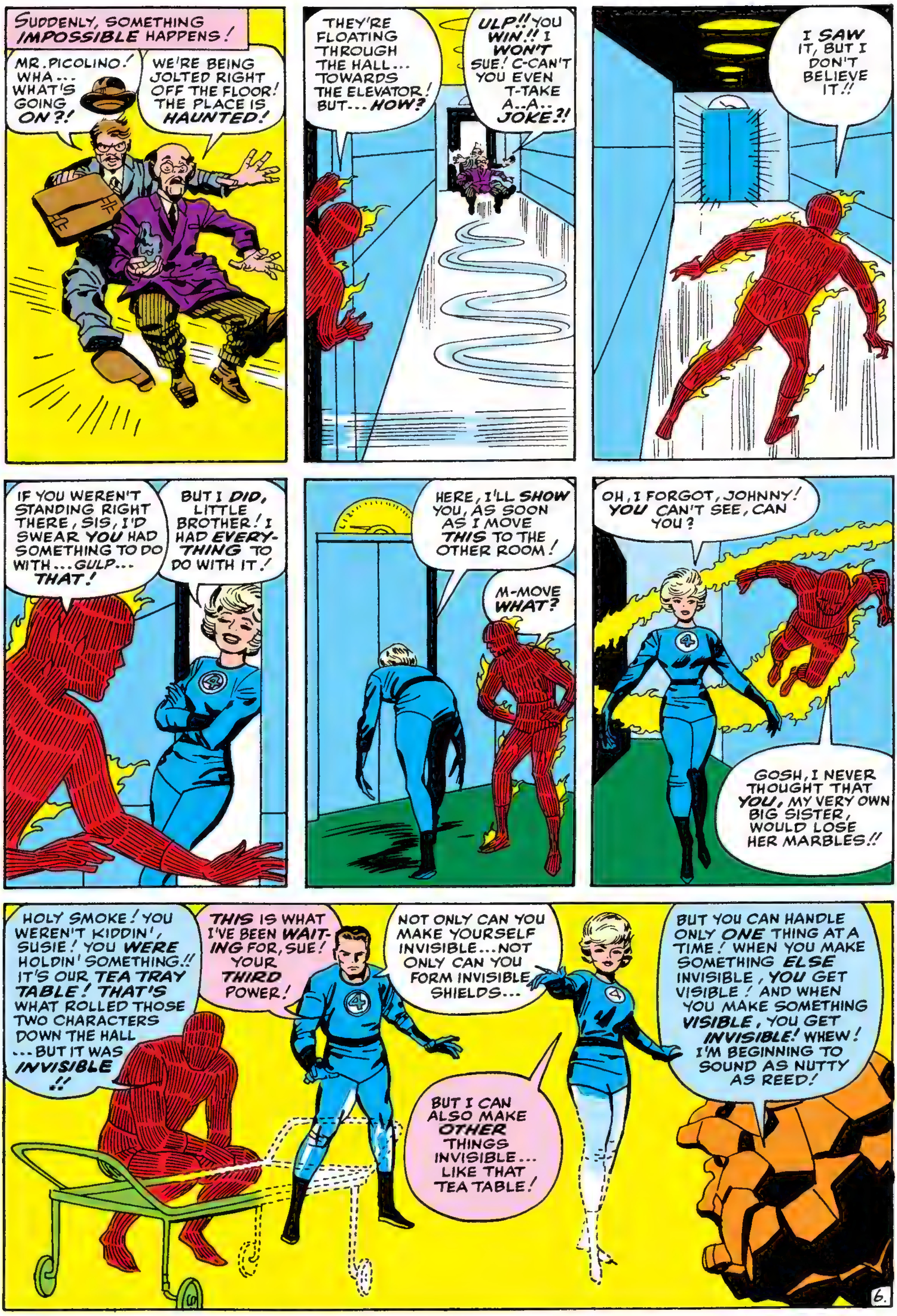
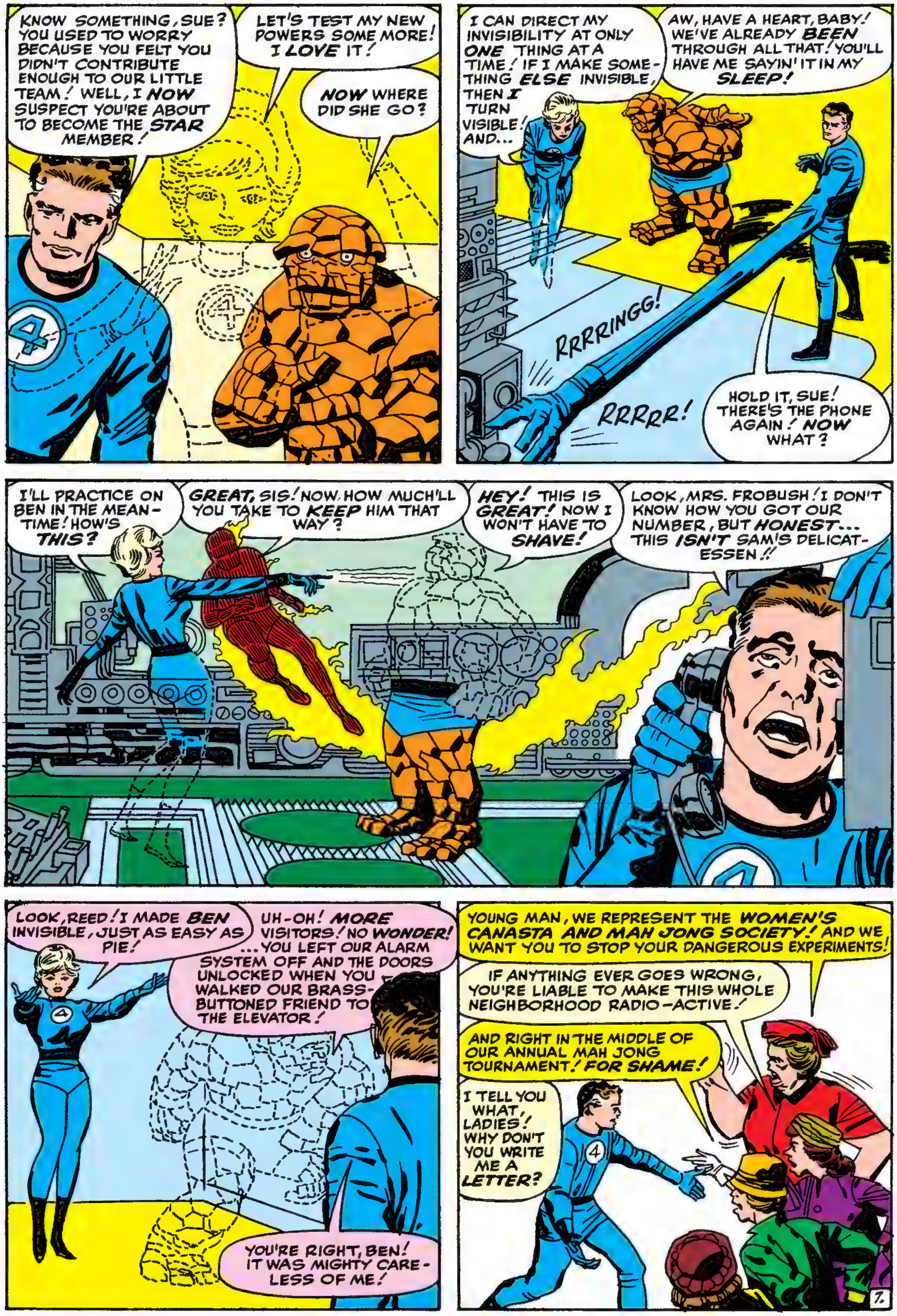
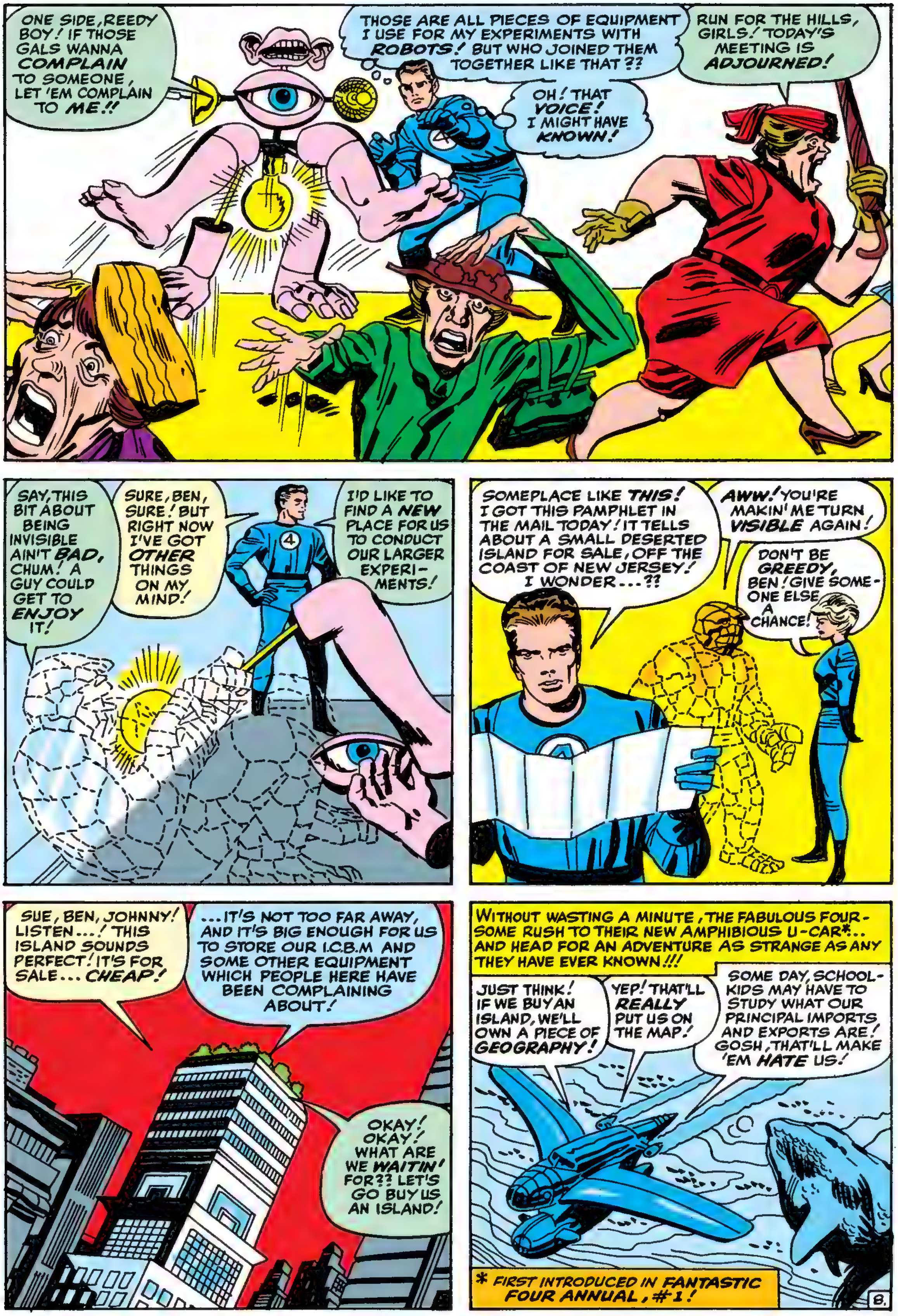

WELL, I'LL BE HANGED...!!
PROBABLY, SON... PROBABLY!
THE RADIATION FROM MY NUCLEAR MEASURING DEVICE MUST HAVE INCREASED YOUR POWER, SUE! BUT YOUR SHIELD IS STILL TOO THIN!
TRY TO CREATE A STRONGER ONE, HON! A THICKER SHIELD OF INVISIBLE ENERGY! CONCENTRATE! THAT'S RIGHT!! YOU'RE GETTING IT!!
OH, REED... THIS IS WONDERFUL! YOUR THEORY WAS RIGHT! MY INVISIBILITY IS A FORM OF ENERGY, AND ONCE I LEARN TO CONTROL IT, I CAN TURN IT INTO A PROTECTIVE SCREEN!
LET'S TEST IT NOW! TRY TO BREAK SUE'S INVISIBLE SHIELD, BEN! GO ON... TRY!
AW, THIS IS KID STUFF!
STEP ASIDE, SUSIE GIRL!
OWW!
YOU DENTED IT, BUT IT HELD! THIS MEANS SUE'S INVISIBILITY REPRESENTS A GREAT SOURCE OF UNTAPPED POWER!!
OKAY, BIG SISTER.. STEP ASIDE! I'M GONNA SHOW OL' BENJAMIN WHAT I CAN DO AGAINST THAT SHIELD!
HEY! IT'S STRONGER THAN I THOUGHT! LOOK HOW IT'S RESISTING MY FLAME!
INCREASE YOUR FLAME, TORCH!
AIN'T YOU EVEN GOT SENSE ENOUGH TO BE EMBARRASSED, JUNIOR?
OKAY... STAND BACK! THERE! I'M THROUGH! BUT... I'VE GOT TO STOP NOW... IT'S TOO EXHAUSTING!
THIS IS ONLY THE BEGINNING, SUE! I SUSPECT THERE ARE STILL OTHER THINGS THAT CAN BE DONE WITH YOUR POWER OF INVISIBILITY! AND WE'RE GOING TO FIND OUT WHAT THEY ARE!

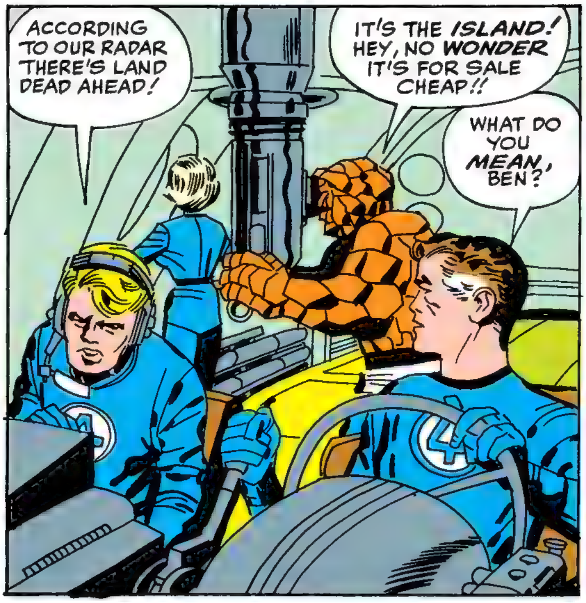

But AT THAT MOMENT, A NEWCOMER ENTERS...
REED! LOOK WHO'S HERE!
I HATE TO BOTHER YOU FELLAS, BUT THIS IS AN OFFICIAL CALL!
COME IN! WHAT'S THE TROUBLE?
IT SURE IS GREAT THE WAY YOUR ELECTRONIC SENTINEL DEVICE TOOK A PICTURE OF MY BADGE, CHECKED IT OUT, AND UNLOCKED THE OUTER DOOR... ALL IN LESS THAN TWO SECONDS!
ANYWAY, I HATE TO HAVE TO TELL YOU THIS, BUT MY PARTNER... HE'S WAITING IN THE CAR... DOWNSTAIRS... MY PARTNER AND I TOSSED A COIN FOR WHO SHOULD COME UP HERE, AND I LOST, SO...
FOR PETE'S SAKE.. WHAT IS IT!??
IT'S THAT I.C.B.M. YOU KEEP ON THE PREMISES! WE'VE HAD SOME COMPLAINTS THAT IT VIOLATES THE ZONING LAW FOR THIS NEIGHBORHOOD!
4
OH, IS THAT ALL? WELL, DON'T WORRY! I HAVE A PERMIT FROM THE C.A.A! COME ON! I'LL SHOW IT TO YOU!
OH, THAT'S FINE! AND WHILE YOU'RE AT IT, COULD I HAVE YOUR AUTOGRAPH FOR MY PARTNER? HE SAVES FAMOUS PEOPLE'S NAMES! THE LAST ONE HE GOT WAS PINKY LEE'S!
WHAT'S WITH ALL THE PHONES NOW? PROBABLY A BUNCH OF STARLETS, PANTIN' FOR DATES WITH ADORABLE ME!
RING!
RING!
But THE THING TURNS OUT TO BE A POOR PROPHET, FOR...
YOU HEARD ME! I WANT TO COMPLAIN ABOUT THOSE FLARES YOU PEOPLE SHOOT OFF AT ALL HOURS! THEY FRIGHTEN MY KIDS!
WHAT'S GOIN' ON HERE?? I'VE GOT A WHOLE KABOODLE OF PROFESSIONAL GRIPERS ON THE LINE!!
IS THIS THE THING? MY CAT TOOK ONE LOOK AT YOU YESTERDAY AND RAN AWAY FROM HOME! WHAT DO YOU INTEND TO DO ABOUT IT??
EVERY TIME YOU HIT YOUR PUNCHING BAG, THE WHOLE BUILDING SHAKES! IF YOU DON'T PUT A STOP TO IT, I'LL COMPLAIN TO THE LANDLORD!
I KNOW THAT YOU PEOPLE KEEP WEAPONS UP THERE!! I'M REPORTING YOU TO THE F.B.I.! I THINK YOU'RE ALL COMMUNIST SPIES! BUT YOU WON'T GET AWAY WITH IT!

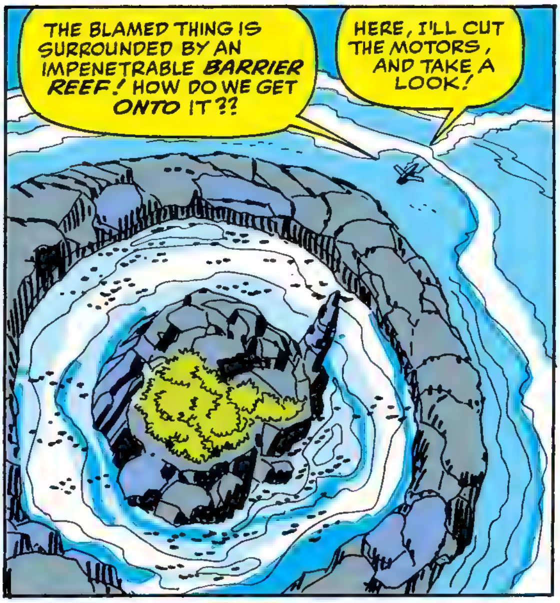

HELLO... HELLO!! ARE YOU ALL STILL THERE?? WELL, JUST HANG ON FOR A MINUTE! I GOT A LITTLE MESSAGE FOR YA!
...I HOPE THIS AIN'T GONNA BE TOO SUBTLE FOR EVERYONE TO UNDERSTAND NICE AND EASY!
I HOPE YOU'RE ALL STILL LISTENING, LITTLE FRIENDS!!
HOLY HANNAH, BENJAMIN! WHAT WAS THAT ALL ABOUT??!
WRONG NUMBER!
BUT BEFORE JOHNNY CAN CATCH HIS BREATH...
YOU THERE! I'M PIERRE PICOLINO, THE WORLD-FAMOUS SCULPTOR! WHERE CAN I FIND THE HUMAN TORCH?
OW! WHO DO YOU THINK I AM...GRANDMA MOSES?
THIS IS A PHOTOGRAPH OF MY GREATEST MASTERPIECE! IT IS CALLED... "TWILIGHT OVER HOBOKEN"! OR THAT'S WHAT IT WAS CALLED!
WHY? WHAT HAPPENED TO IT??
ONE DAY YOU FLEW PAST MY WINDOW, AND NOW... LOOK AT IT... JUST LOOK!
I BROUGHT MY LAWYER WITH ME! I'M SUING YOU FOR A FORTUNE!
I CAN'T SEE WHY! IF YOU ASK ME, IT LOOKS BETTER NOW!

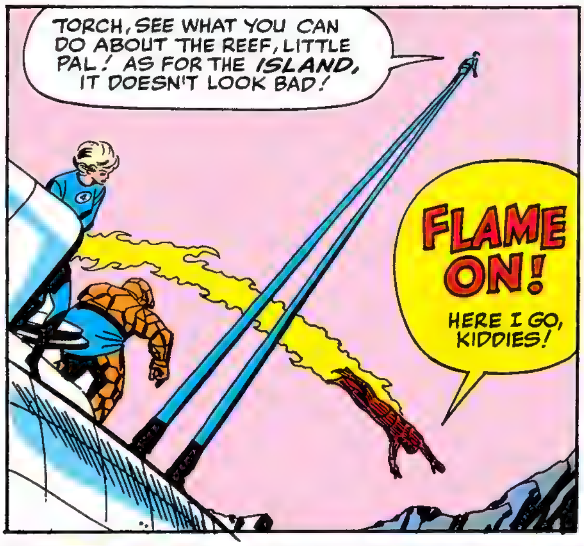

SUDDENLY, SOMETHING IMPOSSIBLE HAPPENS!
MR. PICOLINO! WHA... WHAT'S GOING ON?!
WE'RE BEING JOLTED RIGHT OFF THE FLOOR! THE PLACE IS HAUNTED!
THEY'RE FLOATING THROUGH THE HALL... TOWARDS THE ELEVATOR! BUT... HOW?
ULP!! YOU WIN!! I WON'T SUE! C-CAN'T YOU EVEN T-TAKE A..A.. JOKE?!
I SAW IT, BUT I DON'T BELIEVE IT!!
IF YOU WEREN'T STANDING RIGHT THERE, SIS, I'D SWEAR YOU HAD SOMETHING TO DO WITH... GULP... THAT!
BUT I DID, LITTLE BROTHER! I HAD EVERYTHING TO DO WITH IT!
HERE, I'LL SHOW YOU, AS SOON AS I MOVE THIS TO THE OTHER ROOM!
M-MOVE WHAT?
OH, I FORGOT, JOHNNY! YOU CAN'T SEE, CAN YOU?
GOSH, I NEVER THOUGHT THAT YOU, MY VERY OWN BIG SISTER, WOULD LOSE HER MARBLES!!
HOLY SMOKE! YOU WEREN'T KIDDIN', SUSIE! YOU WERE HOLDIN' SOMETHING!! IT'S OUR TEA TRAY TABLE! THAT'S WHAT ROLLED THOSE TWO CHARACTERS DOWN THE HALL ... BUT IT WAS INVISIBLE!!
THIS IS WHAT I'VE BEEN WAITING FOR, SUE! YOUR THIRD POWER!
NOT ONLY CAN YOU MAKE YOURSELF INVISIBLE... NOT ONLY CAN YOU FORM INVISIBLE SHIELDS...
BUT I CAN ALSO MAKE OTHER THINGS INVISIBLE... LIKE THAT TEA TABLE!
BUT YOU CAN HANDLE ONLY ONE THING AT A TIME! WHEN YOU MAKE SOMETHING ELSE INVISIBLE, YOU GET VISIBLE! AND WHEN YOU MAKE SOMETHING VISIBLE, YOU GET INVISIBLE! WHEW! I'M BEGINNING TO SOUND AS NUTTY AS REED!

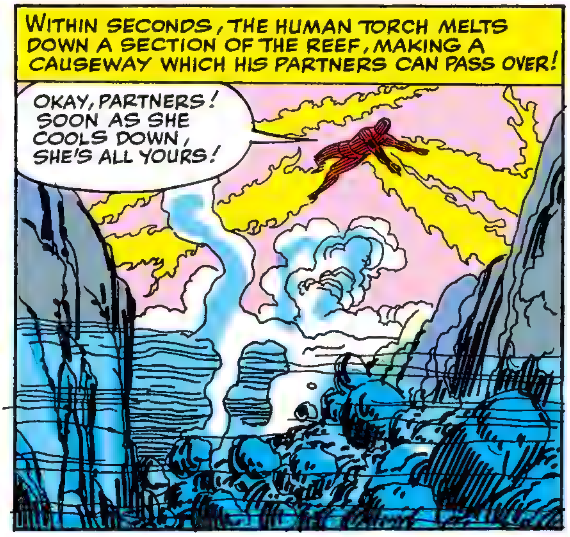

KNOW SOMETHING, SUE? YOU USED TO WORRY BECAUSE YOU FELT YOU DIDN'T CONTRIBUTE ENOUGH TO OUR LITTLE TEAM! WELL, I NOW SUSPECT YOU'RE ABOUT TO BECOME THE STAR MEMBER!
LET'S TEST MY NEW POWERS SOME MORE! I LOVE IT!
NOW WHERE DID SHE GO?
I CAN DIRECT MY INVISIBILITY AT ONLY ONE THING AT A TIME! IF I MAKE SOMETHING ELSE INVISIBLE, THEN I TURN VISIBLE! AND...
AW, HAVE A HEART, BABY! WE'VE ALREADY BEEN THROUGH ALL THAT! YOU'LL HAVE ME SAYIN' IT IN MY SLEEP!
RRRRINGG!
RRRRR!
HOLD IT, SUE! THERE'S THE PHONE AGAIN! NOW WHAT?
I'LL PRACTICE ON BEN IN THE MEANTIME! HOW'S THIS?
GREAT, SIS! NOW HOW MUCH'LL YOU TAKE TO KEEP HIM THAT WAY?
HEY! THIS IS GREAT! NOW I WON'T HAVE TO SHAVE!
LOOK, MRS. FROBUSH! I DON'T KNOW HOW YOU GOT OUR NUMBER, BUT HONEST... THIS ISN'T SAM'S DELICATESSEN!!
LOOK, REED! I MADE BEN INVISIBLE, JUST AS EASY AS PIE!
UH-OH! MORE VISITORS! NO WONDER! ...YOU LEFT OUR ALARM SYSTEM OFF AND THE DOORS UNLOCKED WHEN YOU WALKED OUR BRASS-BUTTONED FRIEND TO THE ELEVATOR!
YOU'RE RIGHT, BEN! IT WAS MIGHTY CARELESS OF ME!
YOUNG MAN, WE REPRESENT THE WOMEN'S CANASTA AND MAH JONG SOCIETY! AND WE WANT YOU TO STOP YOUR DANGEROUS EXPERIMENTS!
IF ANYTHING EVER GOES WRONG, YOU'RE LIABLE TO MAKE THIS WHOLE NEIGHBORHOOD RADIO-ACTIVE!
AND RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE OF OUR ANNUAL MAH JONG TOURNAMENT! FOR SHAME!
I TELL YOU WHAT, LADIES! WHY DON'T YOU WRITE ME A LETTER?

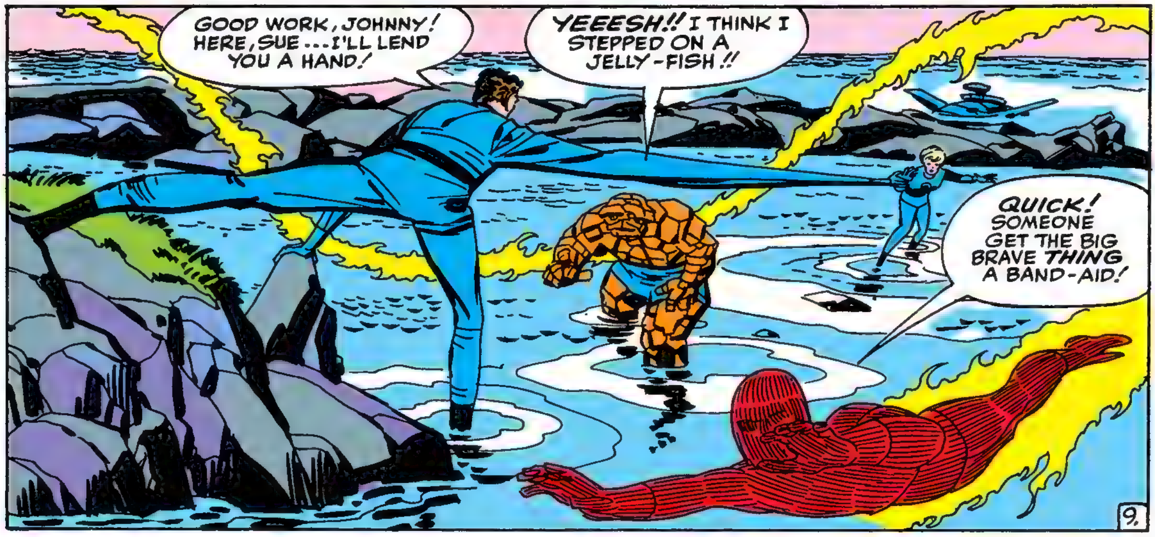

ONE SIDE, REEDY BOY! IF THOSE GALS WANNA *COMPLAIN* TO SOMEONE, LET 'EM COMPLAIN TO *ME!!*
THOSE ARE ALL PIECES OF EQUIPMENT I USE FOR MY EXPERIMENTS WITH *ROBOTS!* BUT WHO JOINED THEM TOGETHER LIKE THAT??
OH! THAT *VOICE!* I MIGHT HAVE *KNOWN!*
RUN FOR THE HILLS, GIRLS! TODAY'S MEETING IS *ADJOURNED!*
SAY, THIS BIT ABOUT BEING INVISIBLE AIN'T *BAD,* CHUM! A GUY COULD GET TO *ENJOY* IT!
SURE, BEN, SURE! BUT RIGHT NOW I'VE GOT *OTHER* THINGS ON MY MIND!
I'D LIKE TO FIND A *NEW* PLACE FOR US TO CONDUCT OUR LARGER EXPERIMENTS!
SOMEPLACE LIKE *THIS!* I GOT THIS PAMPHLET IN THE MAIL TODAY! IT TELLS ABOUT A SMALL DESERTED ISLAND FOR SALE, OFF THE COAST OF NEW JERSEY! I WONDER...??
AWW! YOU'RE MAKIN' ME TURN *VISIBLE* AGAIN!
DON'T BE *GREEDY,* BEN! GIVE SOMEONE ELSE A CHANCE!
SUE, BEN, JOHNNY! LISTEN...! THIS ISLAND SOUNDS PERFECT! IT'S FOR SALE... *CHEAP!*
...IT'S NOT TOO FAR AWAY, AND IT'S BIG ENOUGH FOR US TO STORE OUR I.C.B.M AND SOME OTHER EQUIPMENT WHICH PEOPLE HERE HAVE BEEN COMPLAINING ABOUT!
OKAY! OKAY! WHAT ARE WE *WAITIN'* FOR?? LET'S GO BUY US AN ISLAND!
WITHOUT WASTING A MINUTE, THE FABULOUS FOURSOME RUSH TO THEIR NEW AMPHIBIOUS U-CAR*... AND HEAD FOR AN ADVENTURE AS STRANGE AS ANY THEY HAVE EVER KNOWN!!!
JUST THINK! IF WE BUY AN ISLAND, WE'LL OWN A PIECE OF *GEOGRAPHY!*
YEP! THAT'LL *REALLY* PUT US ON THE MAP!
SOME DAY, SCHOOL-KIDS MAY HAVE TO STUDY WHAT OUR PRINCIPAL IMPORTS AND EXPORTS ARE! GOSH, THAT'LL MAKE 'EM *HATE* US!
* FIRST INTRODUCED IN FANTASTIC FOUR ANNUAL, #1!

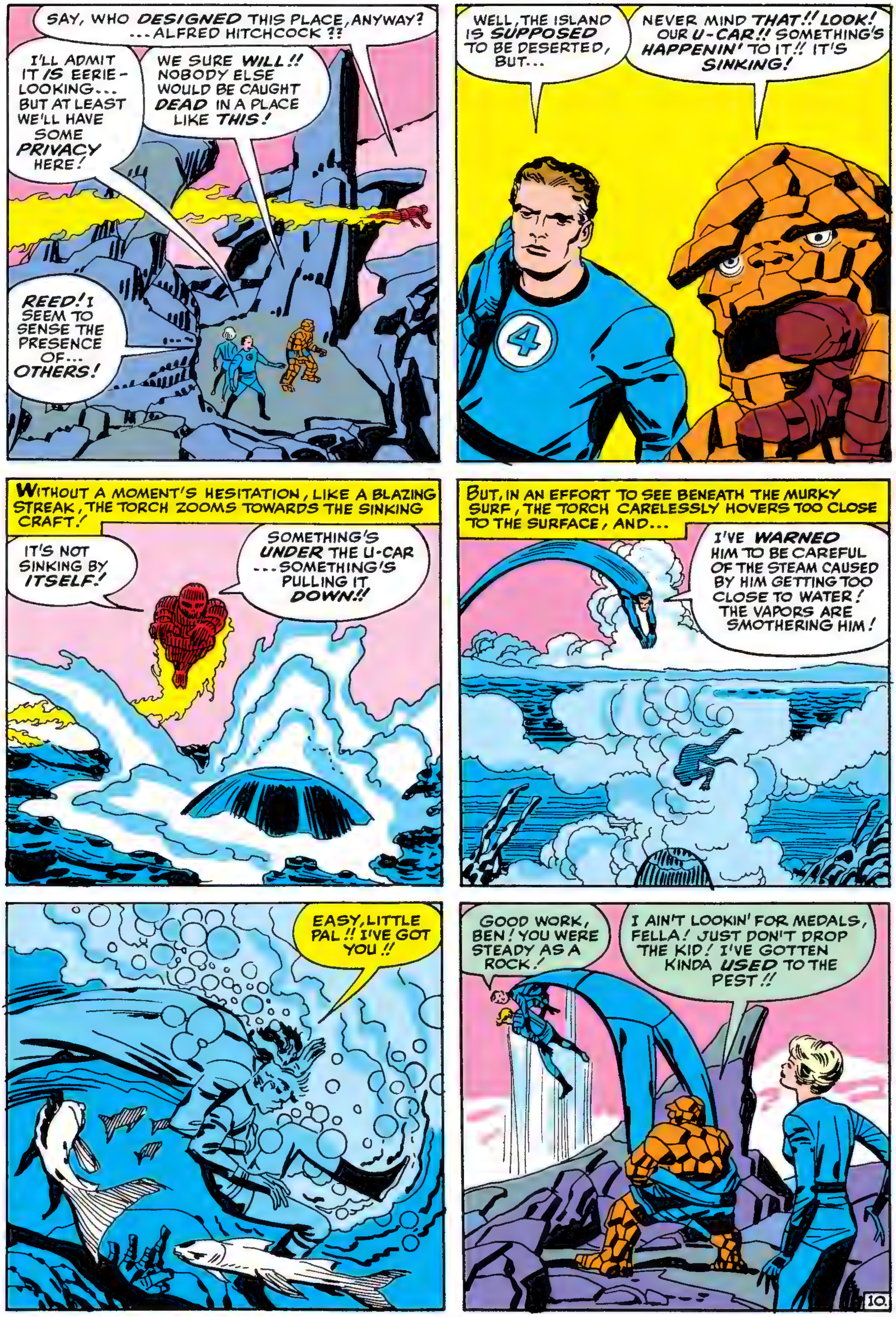

ACCORDING TO OUR RADAR THERE'S LAND DEAD AHEAD!
IT'S THE *ISLAND!* HEY, NO *WONDER* IT'S FOR SALE CHEAP!!
WHAT DO YOU *MEAN,* BEN?

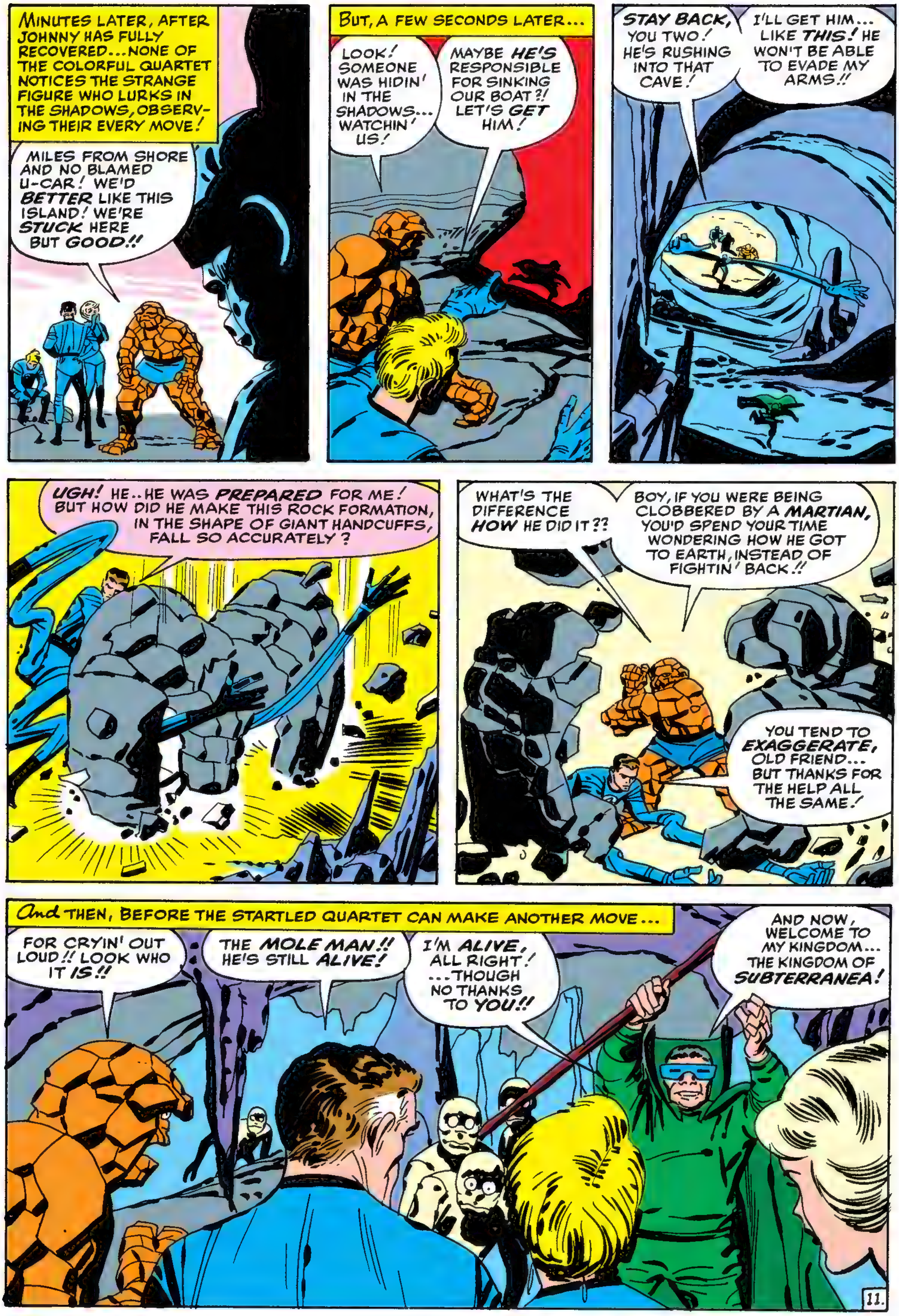

THE BLAMED THING IS SURROUNDED BY AN IMPENETRABLE *BARRIER REEF!* HOW DO WE GET *ONTO* IT??
HERE, I'LL CUT THE MOTORS, AND TAKE A LOOK!

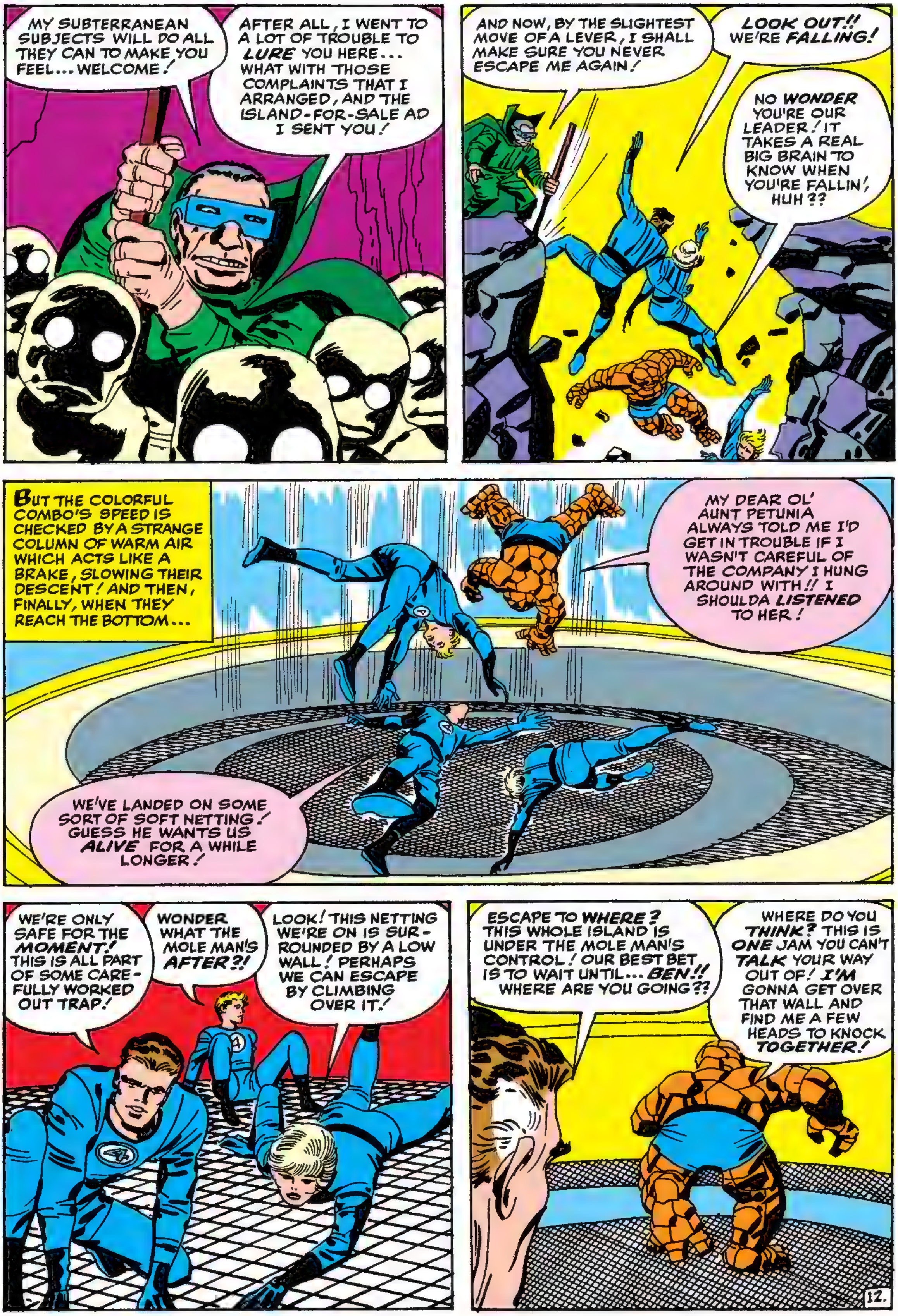

TORCH, SEE WHAT YOU CAN DO ABOUT THE REEF, LITTLE PAL! AS FOR THE *ISLAND,* IT DOESN'T LOOK BAD!
FLAME ON!
HERE I GO, KIDDIES!

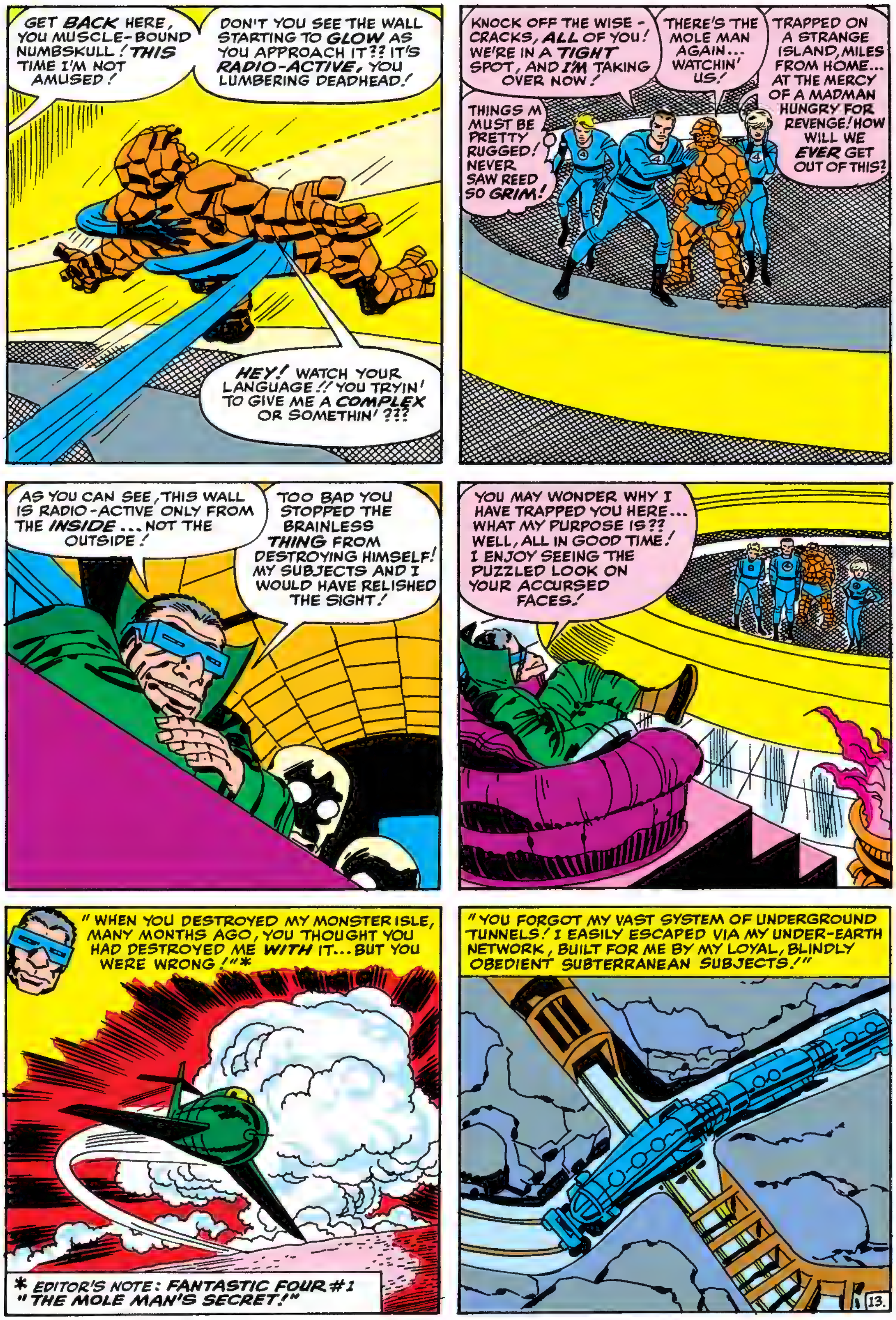

WITHIN SECONDS, THE HUMAN TORCH MELTS DOWN A SECTION OF THE REEF, MAKING A CAUSEWAY WHICH HIS PARTNERS CAN PASS OVER!
OKAY, PARTNERS! SOON AS SHE COOLS DOWN, SHE'S ALL YOURS!

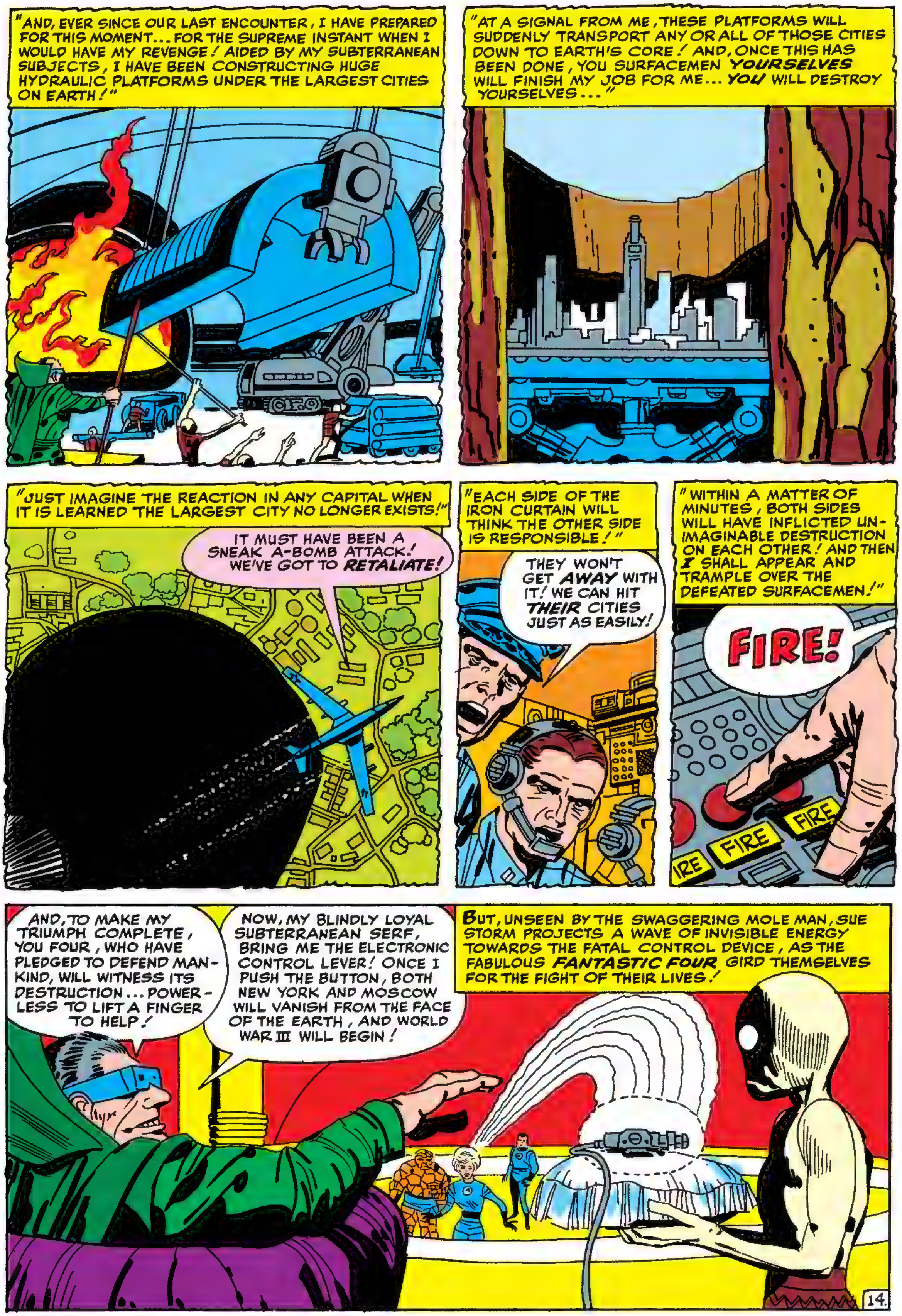

GOOD WORK, JOHNNY! HERE, SUE...I'LL LEND YOU A HAND!
YEEESH!! I THINK I STEPPED ON A JELLY-FISH!!
QUICK! SOMEONE GET THE BIG BRAVE *THING* A BAND-AID!

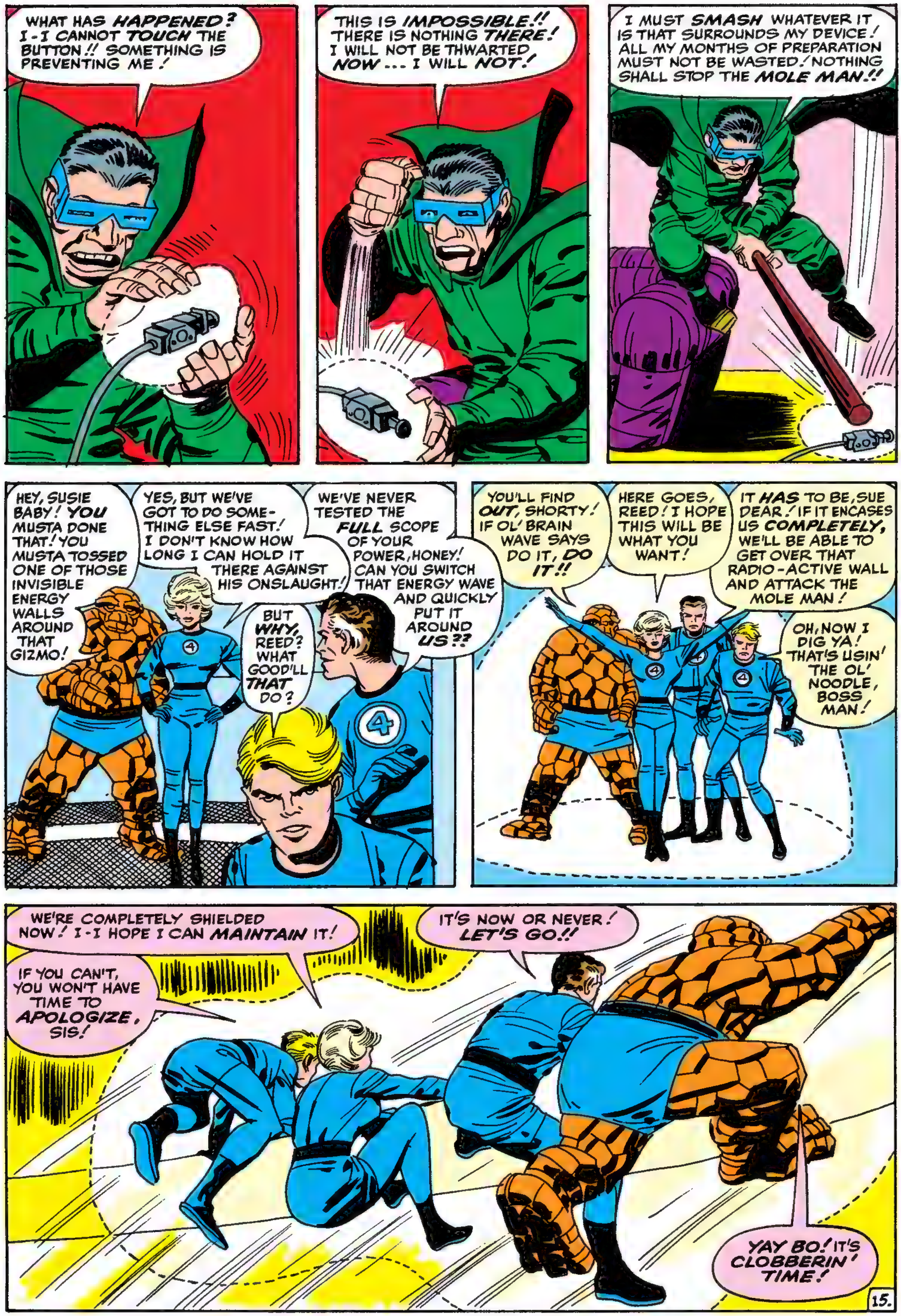

SAY, WHO DESIGNED THIS PLACE, ANYWAY? ...ALFRED HITCHCOCK ??
I'LL ADMIT IT IS EERIE-LOOKING... BUT AT LEAST WE'LL HAVE SOME PRIVACY HERE!
WE SURE WILL!! NOBODY ELSE WOULD BE CAUGHT DEAD IN A PLACE LIKE THIS!
REED! I SEEM TO SENSE THE PRESENCE OF... OTHERS!
WELL, THE ISLAND IS SUPPOSED TO BE DESERTED, BUT...
NEVER MIND THAT!! LOOK! OUR U-CAR!! SOMETHING'S HAPPENIN' TO IT!! IT'S SINKING!
WITHOUT A MOMENT'S HESITATION, LIKE A BLAZING STREAK, THE TORCH ZOOMS TOWARDS THE SINKING CRAFT!
IT'S NOT SINKING BY ITSELF!
SOMETHING'S UNDER THE U-CAR ...SOMETHING'S PULLING IT DOWN!!
BUT, IN AN EFFORT TO SEE BENEATH THE MURKY SURF, THE TORCH CARELESSLY HOVERS TOO CLOSE TO THE SURFACE, AND...
I'VE WARNED HIM TO BE CAREFUL OF THE STEAM CAUSED BY HIM GETTING TOO CLOSE TO WATER! THE VAPORS ARE SMOTHERING HIM!
EASY, LITTLE PAL!! I'VE GOT YOU!!
GOOD WORK, BEN! YOU WERE STEADY AS A ROCK!
I AIN'T LOOKIN' FOR MEDALS, FELLA! JUST DON'T DROP THE KID! I'VE GOTTEN KINDA USED TO THE PEST!!

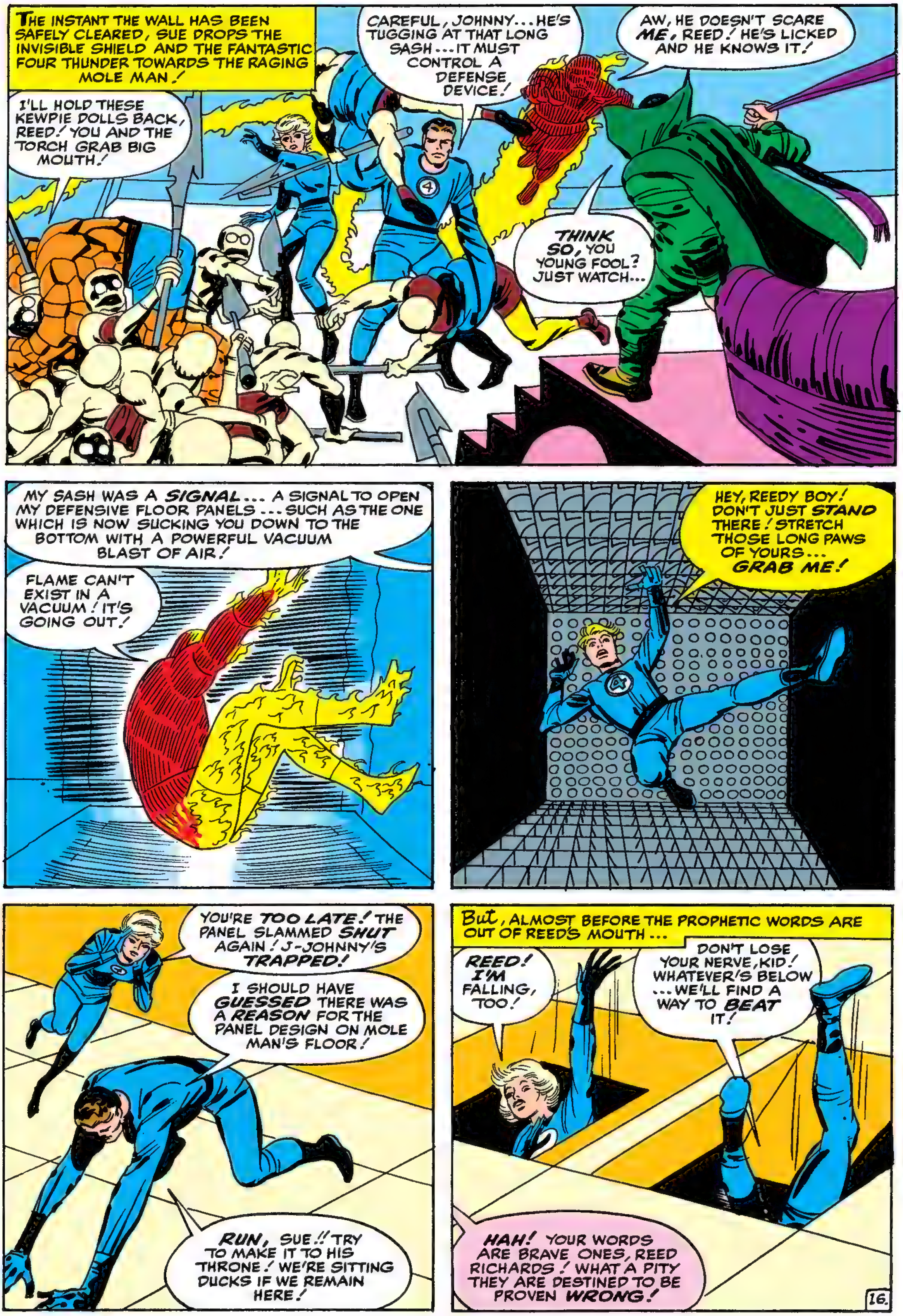

MINUTES LATER, AFTER JOHNNY HAS FULLY RECOVERED...NONE OF THE COLORFUL QUARTET NOTICES THE STRANGE FIGURE WHO LURKS IN THE SHADOWS, OBSERVING THEIR EVERY MOVE!
MILES FROM SHORE AND NO BLAMED U-CAR! WE'D *BETTER* LIKE THIS ISLAND! WE'RE *STUCK* HERE BUT *GOOD!!*
BUT, A FEW SECONDS LATER...
LOOK! SOMEONE WAS HIDIN' IN THE SHADOWS... WATCHIN' US!
MAYBE *HE'S* RESPONSIBLE FOR SINKING OUR BOAT?! LET'S *GET* HIM!
STAY BACK, YOU TWO! HE'S RUSHING INTO THAT CAVE!
I'LL GET HIM... LIKE *THIS!* HE WON'T BE ABLE TO EVADE MY ARMS!!
UGH! HE..HE WAS *PREPARED* FOR ME! BUT HOW DID HE MAKE THIS ROCK FORMATION, IN THE SHAPE OF GIANT HANDCUFFS, FALL SO ACCURATELY?
WHAT'S THE DIFFERENCE *HOW* HE DID IT??
BOY, IF YOU WERE BEING CLOBBERED BY A *MARTIAN,* YOU'D SPEND YOUR TIME WONDERING HOW HE GOT TO EARTH, INSTEAD OF FIGHTIN' BACK!!
YOU TEND TO *EXAGGERATE,* OLD FRIEND... BUT THANKS FOR THE HELP ALL THE SAME!
AND THEN, BEFORE THE STARTLED QUARTET CAN MAKE ANOTHER MOVE...
FOR CRYIN' OUT LOUD!! LOOK WHO IT *IS!!*
THE *MOLE MAN!!* HE'S STILL *ALIVE!*
I'M *ALIVE,* ALL RIGHT! ...THOUGH NO THANKS TO *YOU!!*
AND NOW, WELCOME TO MY KINGDOM... THE KINGDOM OF *SUBTERRANEA!*

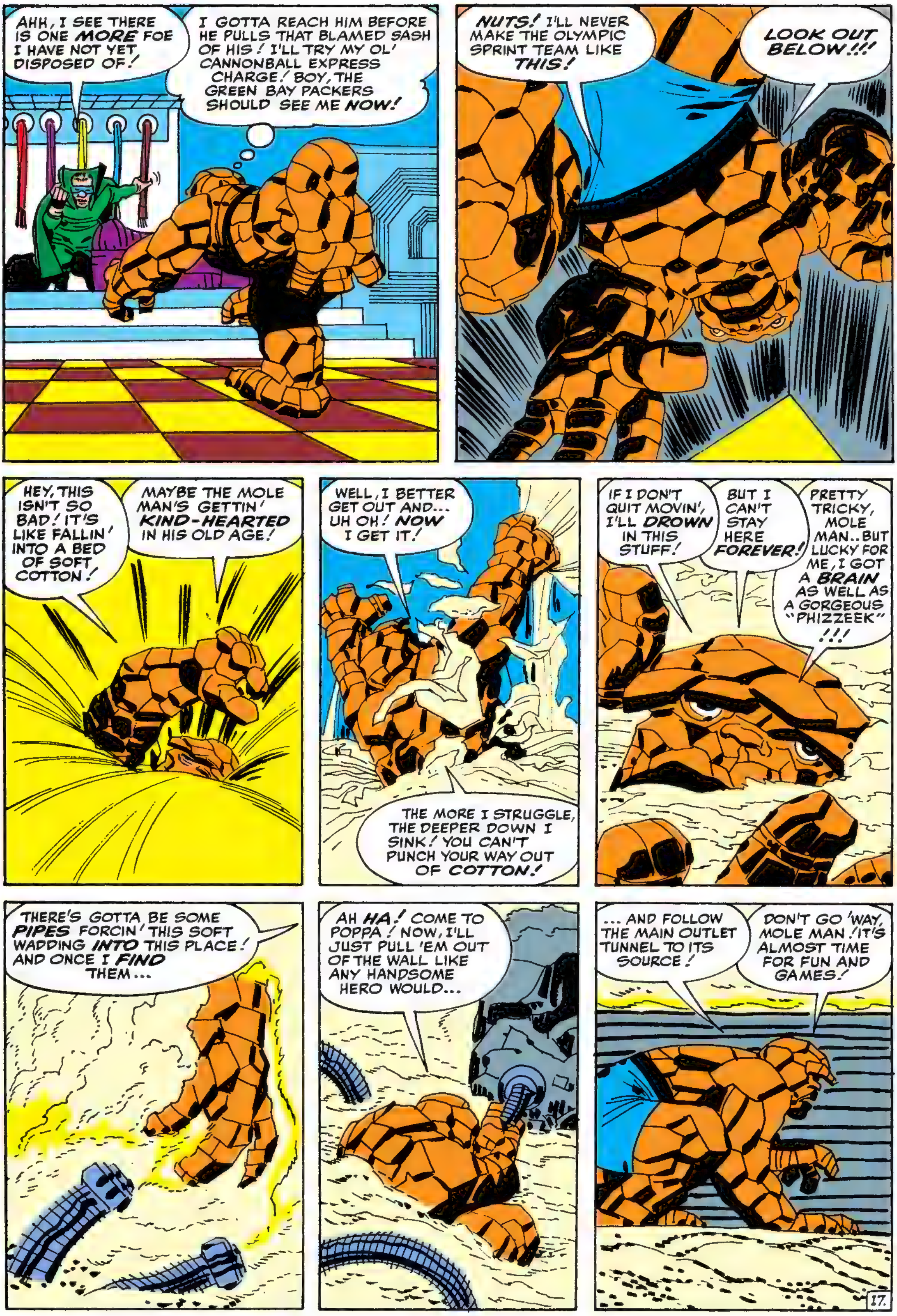

MY SUBTERRANEAN SUBJECTS WILL DO ALL THEY CAN TO MAKE YOU FEEL... WELCOME!
AFTER ALL, I WENT TO A LOT OF TROUBLE TO *LURE* YOU HERE... WHAT WITH THOSE COMPLAINTS THAT I ARRANGED, AND THE ISLAND-FOR-SALE AD I SENT YOU!
AND NOW, BY THE SLIGHTEST MOVE OF A LEVER, I SHALL MAKE SURE YOU NEVER ESCAPE ME AGAIN!
LOOK OUT!! WE'RE *FALLING!*
NO *WONDER* YOU'RE OUR LEADER! IT TAKES A REAL BIG BRAIN TO KNOW WHEN YOU'RE FALLIN', HUH??
BUT THE COLORFUL COMBO'S SPEED IS CHECKED BY A STRANGE COLUMN OF WARM AIR WHICH ACTS LIKE A BRAKE, SLOWING THEIR DESCENT! AND THEN, FINALLY, WHEN THEY REACH THE BOTTOM...
MY DEAR OL' AUNT PETUNIA ALWAYS TOLD ME I'D GET IN TROUBLE IF I WASN'T CAREFUL OF THE COMPANY I HUNG AROUND WITH!! I SHOULDA *LISTENED* TO HER!
WE'VE LANDED ON SOME SORT OF SOFT NETTING! GUESS HE WANTS US *ALIVE* FOR A WHILE LONGER!
WE'RE ONLY SAFE FOR THE *MOMENT!* THIS IS ALL PART OF SOME CAREFULLY WORKED OUT TRAP!
WONDER WHAT THE MOLE MAN'S *AFTER?!*
LOOK! THIS NETTING WE'RE ON IS SURROUNDED BY A LOW WALL! PERHAPS WE CAN ESCAPE BY CLIMBING OVER IT!
ESCAPE TO *WHERE?* THIS WHOLE ISLAND IS UNDER THE MOLE MAN'S CONTROL! OUR BEST BET IS TO WAIT UNTIL... *BEN!!* WHERE ARE YOU GOING??
WHERE DO YOU *THINK?* THIS IS *ONE* JAM YOU CAN'T *TALK* YOUR WAY OUT OF! *I'M* GONNA GET OVER THAT WALL AND FIND ME A FEW HEADS TO KNOCK *TOGETHER!*

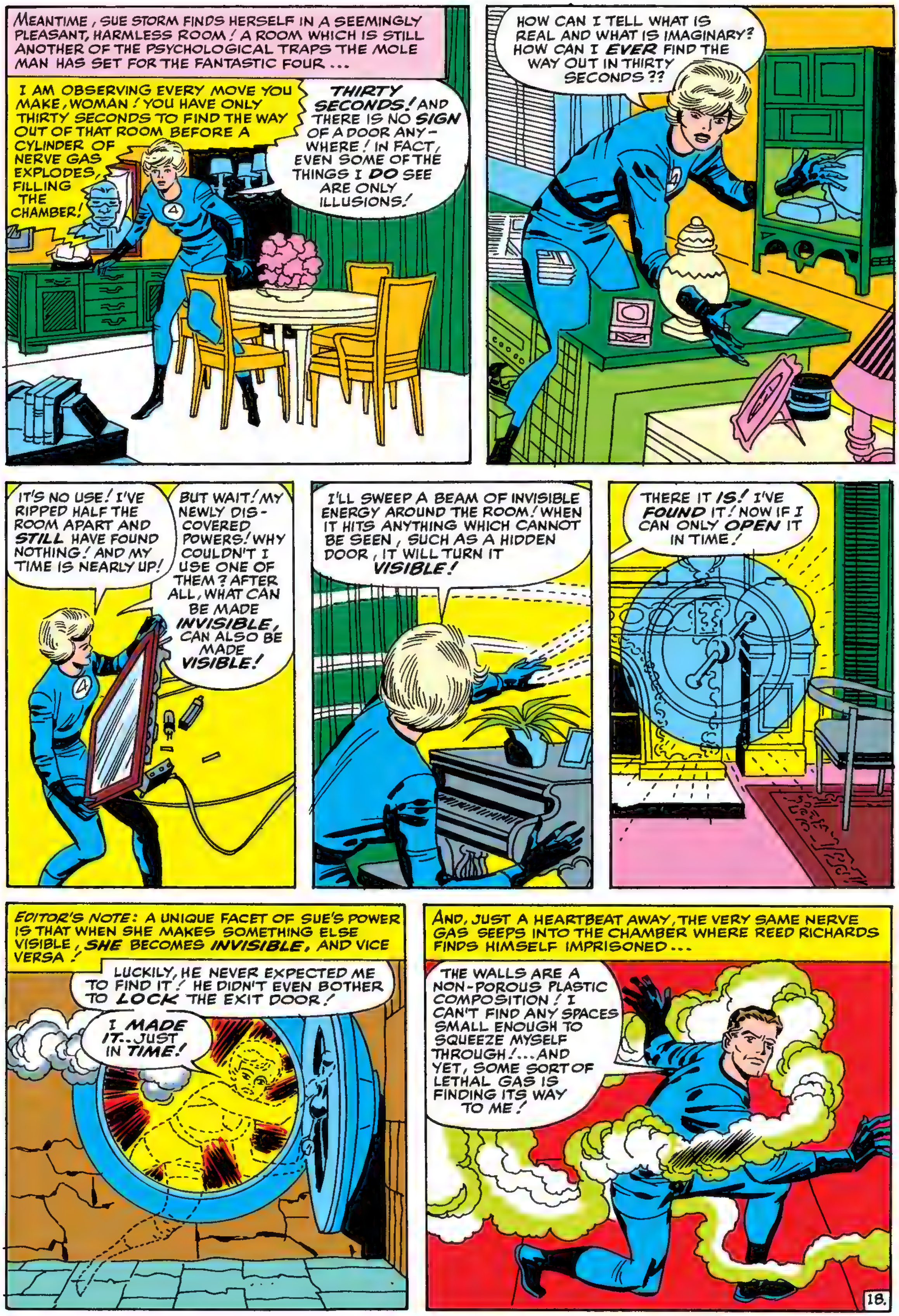

GET BACK HERE, YOU MUSCLE-BOUND NUMBSKULL! THIS TIME I'M NOT AMUSED!
DON'T YOU SEE THE WALL STARTING TO GLOW AS YOU APPROACH IT?? IT'S RADIO-ACTIVE, YOU LUMBERING DEADHEAD!
HEY! WATCH YOUR LANGUAGE!! YOU TRYIN' TO GIVE ME A COMPLEX OR SOMETHIN' ???
KNOCK OFF THE WISE-CRACKS, ALL OF YOU! WE'RE IN A TIGHT SPOT, AND I'M TAKING OVER NOW!
THERE'S THE MOLE MAN AGAIN... WATCHIN' US!
TRAPPED ON A STRANGE ISLAND, MILES FROM HOME... AT THE MERCY OF A MADMAN HUNGRY FOR REVENGE! HOW WILL WE EVER GET OUT OF THIS?
THINGS M MUST BE PRETTY RUGGED! NEVER SAW REED SO GRIM!
AS YOU CAN SEE, THIS WALL IS RADIO-ACTIVE ONLY FROM THE INSIDE... NOT THE OUTSIDE!
TOO BAD YOU STOPPED THE BRAINLESS THING FROM DESTROYING HIMSELF! MY SUBJECTS AND I WOULD HAVE RELISHED THE SIGHT!
YOU MAY WONDER WHY I HAVE TRAPPED YOU HERE... WHAT MY PURPOSE IS?? WELL, ALL IN GOOD TIME! I ENJOY SEEING THE PUZZLED LOOK ON YOUR ACCURSED FACES!
"WHEN YOU DESTROYED MY MONSTER ISLE, MANY MONTHS AGO, YOU THOUGHT YOU HAD DESTROYED ME WITH IT... BUT YOU WERE WRONG!"*
* EDITOR'S NOTE: FANTASTIC FOUR #1 "THE MOLE MAN'S SECRET!"
"YOU FORGOT MY VAST SYSTEM OF UNDERGROUND TUNNELS! I EASILY ESCAPED VIA MY UNDER-EARTH NETWORK, BUILT FOR ME BY MY LOYAL, BLINDLY OBEDIENT SUBTERRANEAN SUBJECTS!"

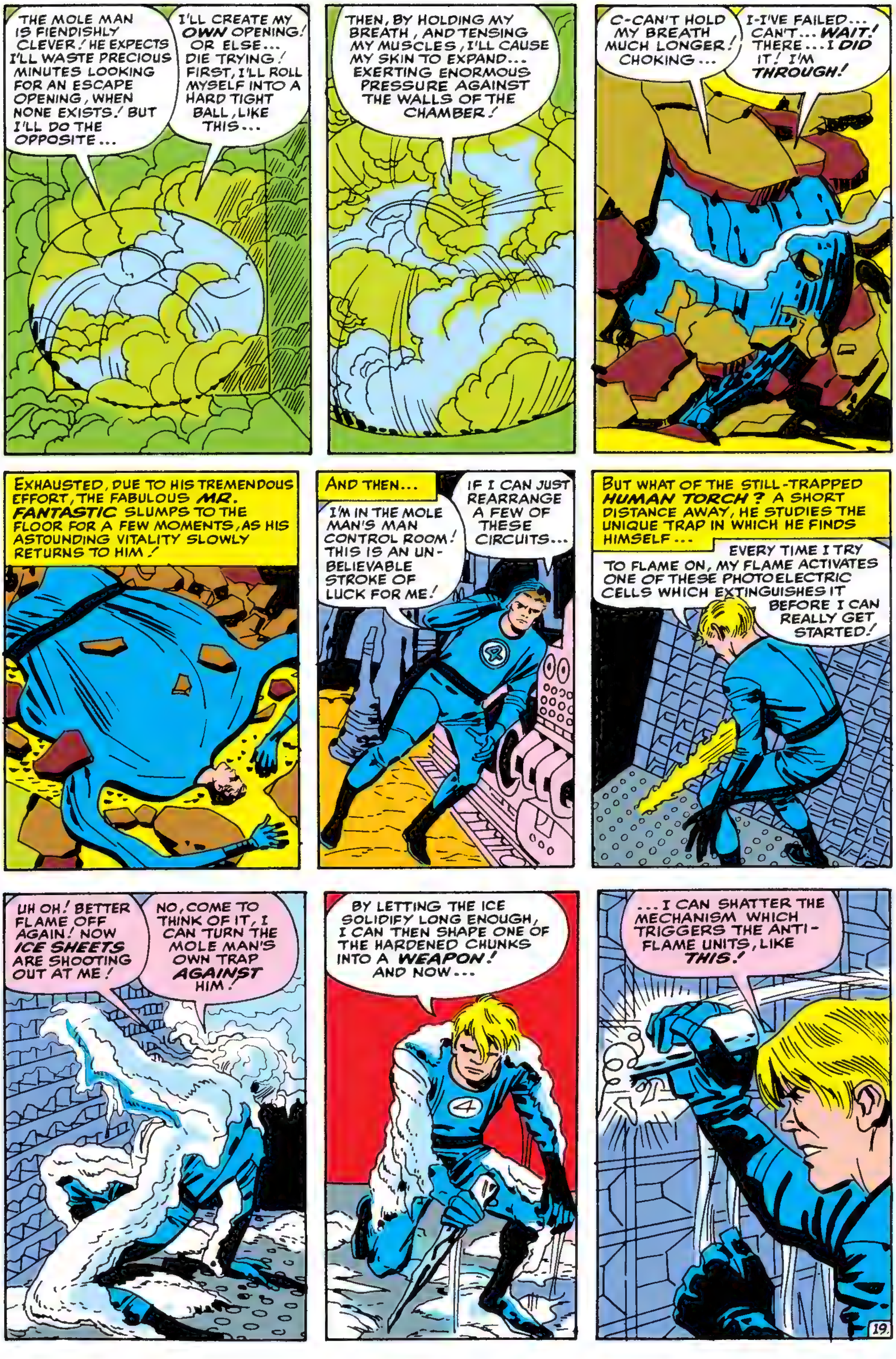

"AND, EVER SINCE OUR LAST ENCOUNTER, I HAVE PREPARED FOR THIS MOMENT... FOR THE SUPREME INSTANT WHEN I WOULD HAVE MY REVENGE! AIDED BY MY SUBTERRANEAN SUBJECTS, I HAVE BEEN CONSTRUCTING HUGE HYDRAULIC PLATFORMS UNDER THE LARGEST CITIES ON EARTH!"
"AT A SIGNAL FROM ME, THESE PLATFORMS WILL SUDDENLY TRANSPORT ANY OR ALL OF THOSE CITIES DOWN TO EARTH'S CORE! AND, ONCE THIS HAS BEEN DONE, YOU SURFACEMEN ***YOURSELVES*** WILL FINISH MY JOB FOR ME... ***YOU*** WILL DESTROY YOURSELVES..."
"JUST IMAGINE THE REACTION IN ANY CAPITAL WHEN IT IS LEARNED THE LARGEST CITY NO LONGER EXISTS!"
IT MUST HAVE BEEN A SNEAK A-BOMB ATTACK! WE'VE GOT TO ***RETALIATE!***
"EACH SIDE OF THE IRON CURTAIN WILL THINK THE OTHER SIDE IS RESPONSIBLE!"
THEY WON'T GET ***AWAY*** WITH IT! WE CAN HIT ***THEIR*** CITIES JUST AS EASILY!
"WITHIN A MATTER OF MINUTES, BOTH SIDES WILL HAVE INFLICTED UNIMAGINABLE DESTRUCTION ON EACH OTHER! AND THEN ***I*** SHALL APPEAR AND TRAMPLE OVER THE DEFEATED SURFACEMEN!"
FIRE!
IRE
FIRE
FIRE
AND, TO MAKE MY TRIUMPH COMPLETE, YOU FOUR, WHO HAVE PLEDGED TO DEFEND MANKIND, WILL WITNESS ITS DESTRUCTION... POWERLESS TO LIFT A FINGER TO HELP!
NOW, MY BLINDLY LOYAL SUBTERRANEAN SERF, BRING ME THE ELECTRONIC CONTROL LEVER! ONCE I PUSH THE BUTTON, BOTH NEW YORK AND MOSCOW WILL VANISH FROM THE FACE OF THE EARTH, AND WORLD WAR III WILL BEGIN!
BUT, UNSEEN BY THE SWAGGERING MOLE MAN, SUE STORM PROJECTS A WAVE OF INVISIBLE ENERGY TOWARDS THE FATAL CONTROL DEVICE, AS THE FABULOUS ***FANTASTIC FOUR*** GIRD THEMSELVES FOR THE FIGHT OF THEIR LIVES!
14.

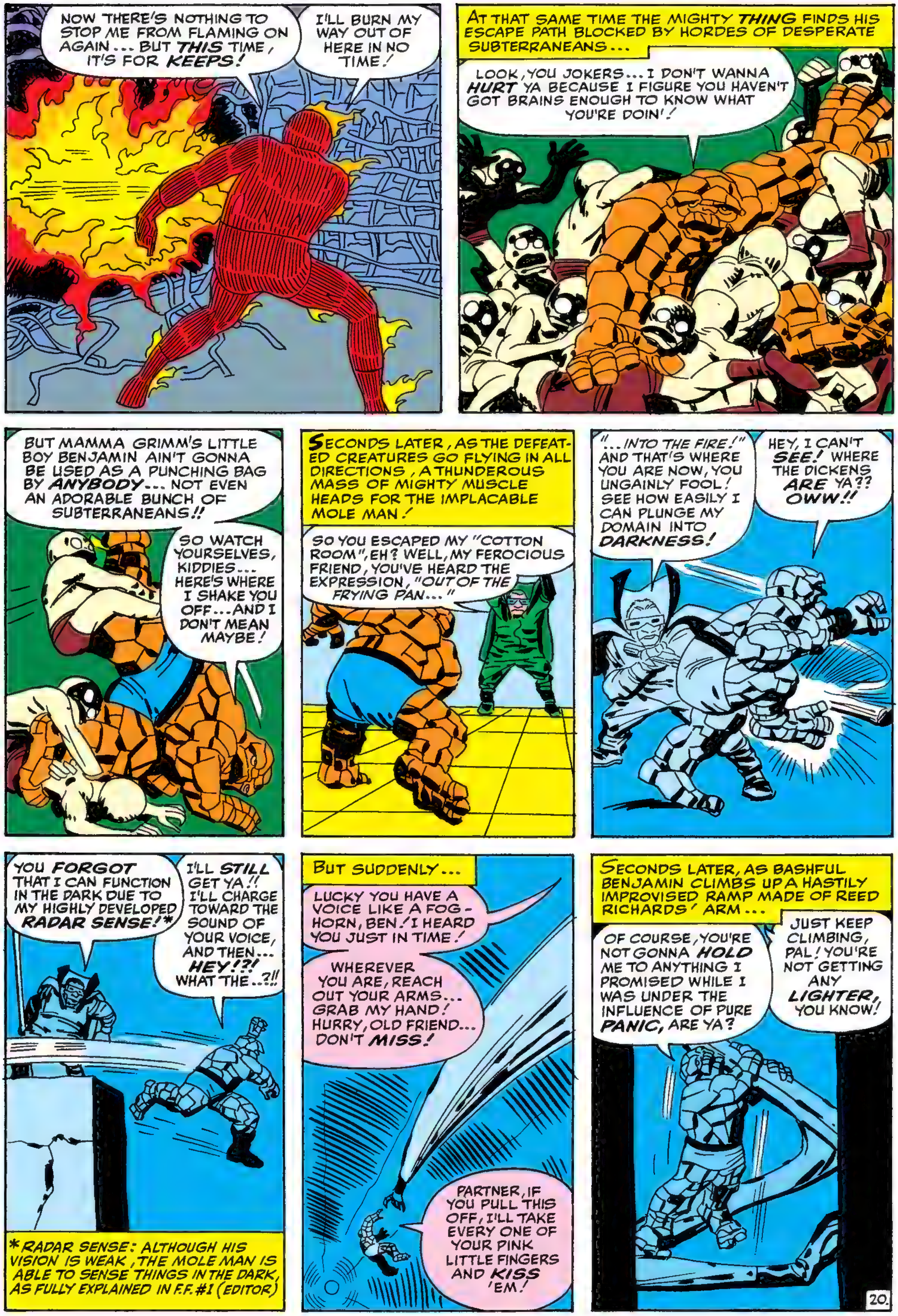

WHAT HAS HAPPENED? I-I CANNOT TOUCH THE BUTTON!! SOMETHING IS PREVENTING ME!
THIS IS IMPOSSIBLE!! THERE IS NOTHING THERE! I WILL NOT BE THWARTED NOW... I WILL NOT!
I MUST SMASH WHATEVER IT IS THAT SURROUNDS MY DEVICE! ALL MY MONTHS OF PREPARATION MUST NOT BE WASTED! NOTHING SHALL STOP THE MOLE MAN!!
HEY, SUSIE BABY! YOU MUSTA DONE THAT! YOU MUSTA TOSSED ONE OF THOSE INVISIBLE ENERGY WALLS AROUND THAT GIZMO!
YES, BUT WE'VE GOT TO DO SOMETHING ELSE FAST! I DON'T KNOW HOW LONG I CAN HOLD IT THERE AGAINST HIS ONSLAUGHT!
WE'VE NEVER TESTED THE FULL SCOPE OF YOUR POWER, HONEY! CAN YOU SWITCH THAT ENERGY WAVE AND QUICKLY PUT IT AROUND US??
BUT WHY, REED? WHAT GOOD'LL THAT DO?
YOU'LL FIND OUT, SHORTY! IF OL' BRAIN WAVE SAYS DO IT, DO IT!!
HERE GOES, REED! I HOPE THIS WILL BE WHAT YOU WANT!
IT HAS TO BE, SUE DEAR! IF IT ENCASES US COMPLETELY, WE'LL BE ABLE TO GET OVER THAT RADIO-ACTIVE WALL AND ATTACK THE MOLE MAN!
OH, NOW I DIG YA! THAT'S USIN' THE OL' NOODLE, BOSS MAN!
WE'RE COMPLETELY SHIELDED NOW! I-I HOPE I CAN MAINTAIN IT!
IF YOU CAN'T, YOU WON'T HAVE TIME TO APOLOGIZE, SIS!
IT'S NOW OR NEVER! LET'S GO!!
YAY BO! IT'S CLOBBERIN' TIME!

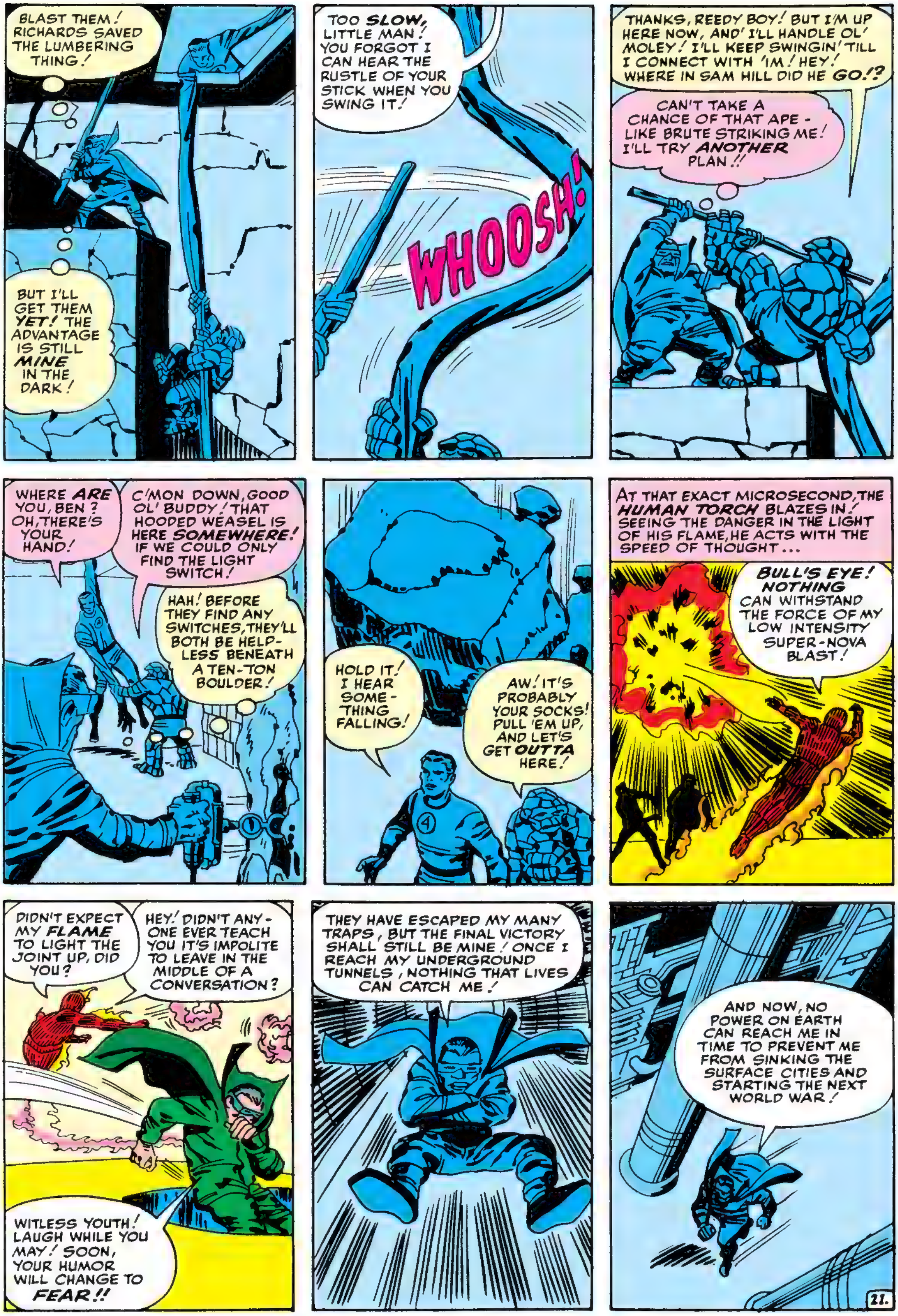

THE INSTANT THE WALL HAS BEEN SAFELY CLEARED, SUE DROPS THE INVISIBLE SHIELD AND THE FANTASTIC FOUR THUNDER TOWARDS THE RAGING MOLE MAN!
CAREFUL, JOHNNY... HE'S TUGGING AT THAT LONG SASH... IT MUST CONTROL A DEFENSE DEVICE!
AW, HE DOESN'T SCARE *ME*, REED! HE'S LICKED AND HE KNOWS IT!
I'LL HOLD THESE KEWPIE DOLLS BACK, REED! YOU AND THE TORCH GRAB BIG MOUTH!
THINK SO, YOU YOUNG FOOL? JUST WATCH...
MY SASH WAS A *SIGNAL*... A SIGNAL TO OPEN MY DEFENSIVE FLOOR PANELS... SUCH AS THE ONE WHICH IS NOW SUCKING YOU DOWN TO THE BOTTOM WITH A POWERFUL VACUUM BLAST OF AIR!
FLAME CAN'T EXIST IN A VACUUM! IT'S GOING OUT!
HEY, REEDY BOY! DON'T JUST *STAND* THERE! STRETCH THOSE LONG PAWS OF YOURS... *GRAB ME!*
YOU'RE *TOO LATE!* THE PANEL SLAMMED *SHUT* AGAIN! J-JOHNNY'S *TRAPPED!*
I SHOULD HAVE *GUESSED* THERE WAS A *REASON* FOR THE PANEL DESIGN ON MOLE MAN'S FLOOR!
RUN, SUE!! TRY TO MAKE IT TO HIS THRONE! WE'RE SITTING DUCKS IF WE REMAIN HERE!
BUT, ALMOST BEFORE THE PROPHETIC WORDS ARE OUT OF REED'S MOUTH...
REED! I'M FALLING, TOO!
DON'T LOSE YOUR NERVE, KID! WHATEVER'S BELOW... WE'LL FIND A WAY TO *BEAT* IT!
HAH! YOUR WORDS ARE BRAVE ONES, REED RICHARDS! WHAT A PITY THEY ARE DESTINED TO BE PROVEN *WRONG!*

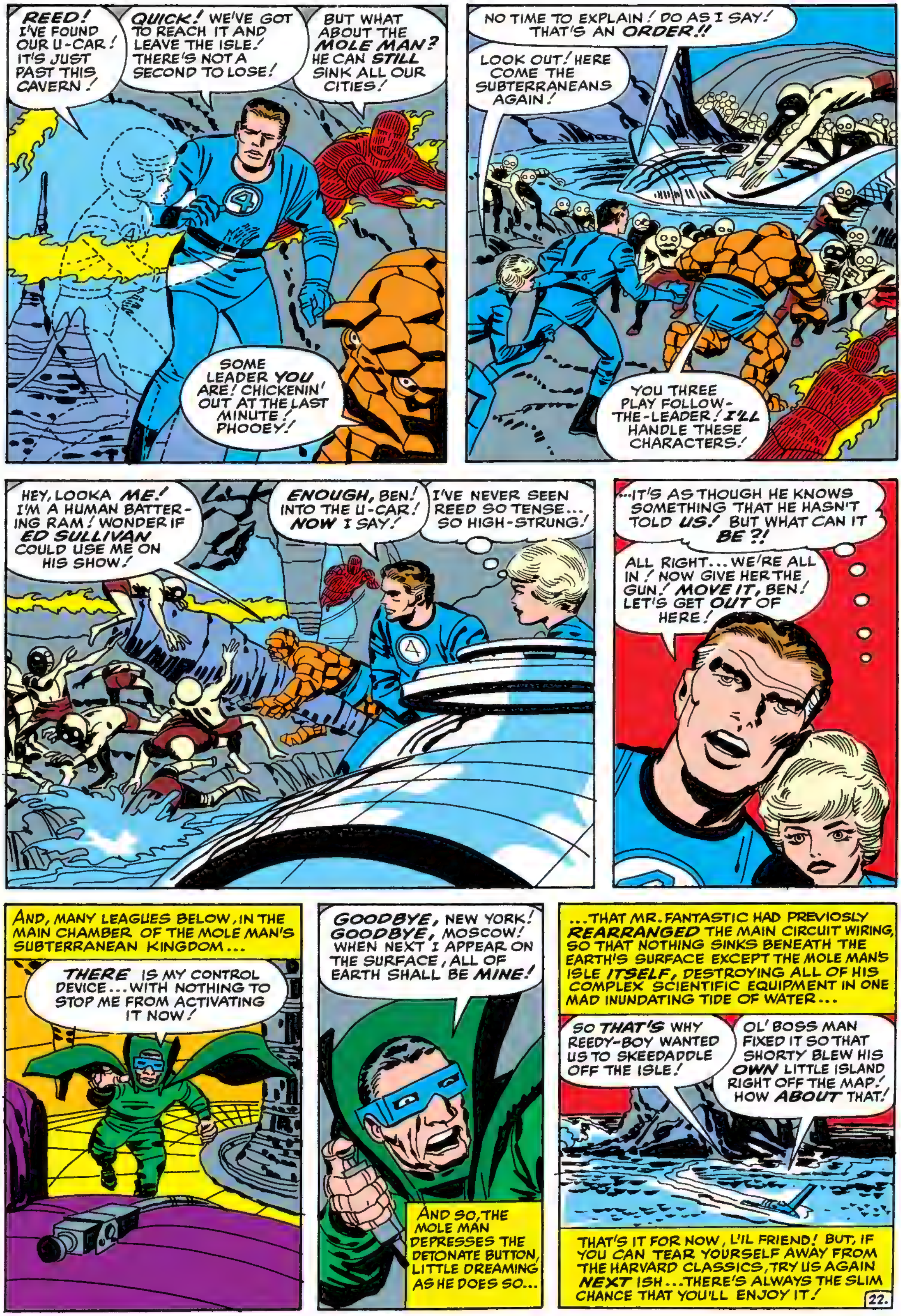

AHH, I SEE THERE IS ONE MORE FOE I HAVE NOT YET DISPOSED OF!
I GOTTA REACH HIM BEFORE HE PULLS THAT BLAMED SASH OF HIS! I'LL TRY MY OL' CANNONBALL EXPRESS CHARGE! BOY, THE GREEN BAY PACKERS SHOULD SEE ME NOW!
NUTS! I'LL NEVER MAKE THE OLYMPIC SPRINT TEAM LIKE THIS!
LOOK OUT BELOW!!!
HEY, THIS ISN'T SO BAD! IT'S LIKE FALLIN' INTO A BED OF SOFT COTTON!
MAYBE THE MOLE MAN'S GETTIN' KIND-HEARTED IN HIS OLD AGE!
WELL, I BETTER GET OUT AND... UH OH! NOW I GET IT!
THE MORE I STRUGGLE, THE DEEPER DOWN I SINK! YOU CAN'T PUNCH YOUR WAY OUT OF COTTON!
IF I DON'T QUIT MOVIN', I'LL DROWN IN THIS STUFF!
BUT I CAN'T STAY HERE FOREVER!
PRETTY TRICKY, MOLE MAN.. BUT LUCKY FOR ME, I GOT A BRAIN AS WELL AS A GORGEOUS "PHIZZEEK"!!!
THERE'S GOTTA BE SOME PIPES FORCIN' THIS SOFT WADDING INTO THIS PLACE! AND ONCE I FIND THEM...
AH HA! COME TO POPPA! NOW, I'LL JUST PULL 'EM OUT OF THE WALL LIKE ANY HANDSOME HERO WOULD...
... AND FOLLOW THE MAIN OUTLET TUNNEL TO ITS SOURCE!
DON'T GO 'WAY, MOLE MAN! IT'S ALMOST TIME FOR FUN AND GAMES!

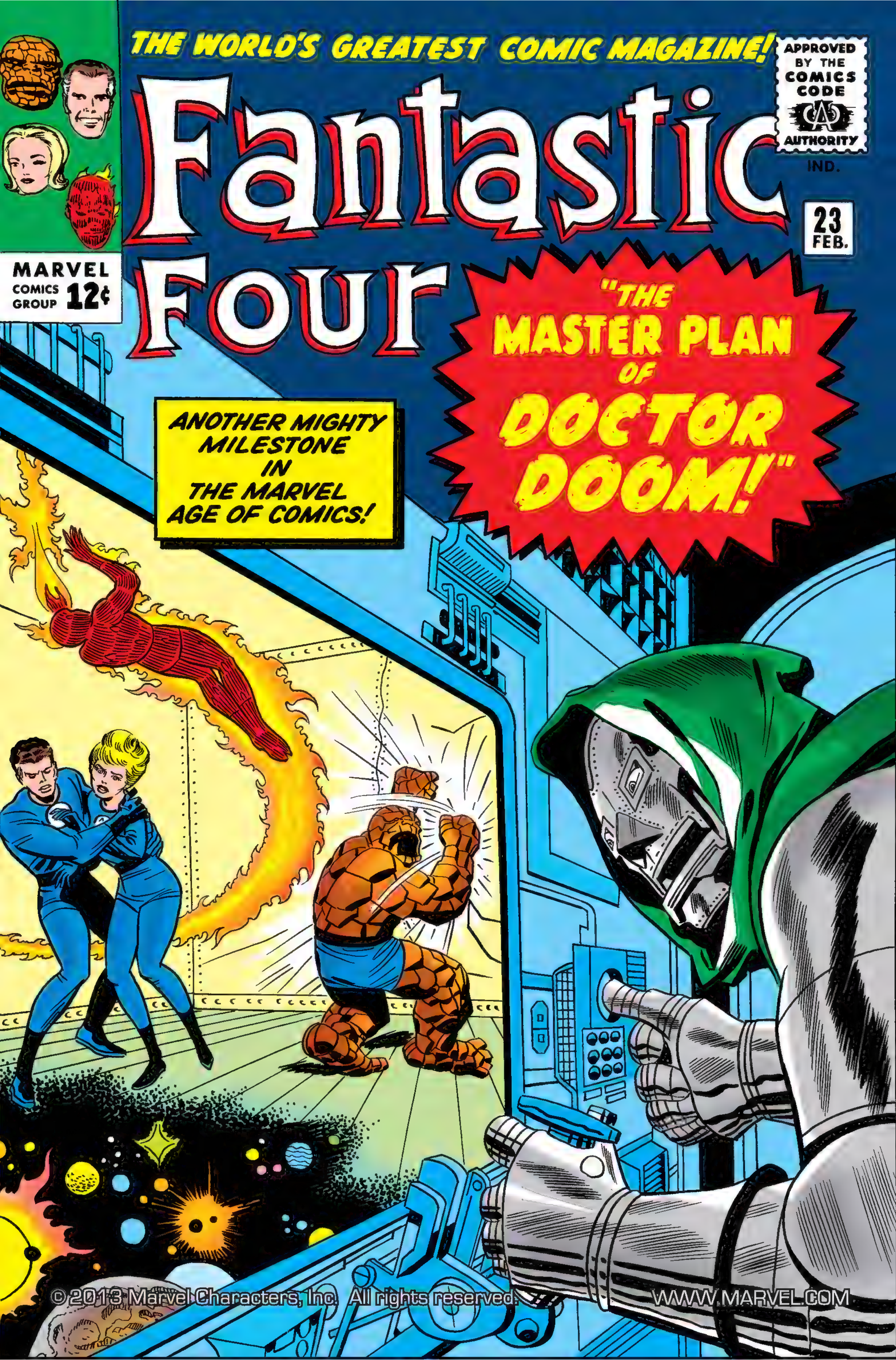

MEANTIME, SUE STORM FINDS HERSELF IN A SEEMINGLY PLEASANT, HARMLESS ROOM! A ROOM WHICH IS STILL ANOTHER OF THE PSYCHOLOGICAL TRAPS THE MOLE MAN HAS SET FOR THE FANTASTIC FOUR...
I AM OBSERVING EVERY MOVE YOU MAKE, WOMAN! YOU HAVE ONLY THIRTY SECONDS TO FIND THE WAY OUT OF THAT ROOM BEFORE A CYLINDER OF NERVE GAS EXPLODES, FILLING THE CHAMBER!
THIRTY SECONDS! AND THERE IS NO SIGN OF A DOOR ANYWHERE! IN FACT, EVEN SOME OF THE THINGS I DO SEE ARE ONLY ILLUSIONS!
HOW CAN I TELL WHAT IS REAL AND WHAT IS IMAGINARY? HOW CAN I EVER FIND THE WAY OUT IN THIRTY SECONDS??
IT'S NO USE! I'VE RIPPED HALF THE ROOM APART AND STILL HAVE FOUND NOTHING! AND MY TIME IS NEARLY UP!
BUT WAIT! MY NEWLY DISCOVERED POWERS! WHY COULDN'T I USE ONE OF THEM? AFTER ALL, WHAT CAN BE MADE INVISIBLE, CAN ALSO BE MADE VISIBLE!
I'LL SWEEP A BEAM OF INVISIBLE ENERGY AROUND THE ROOM! WHEN IT HITS ANYTHING WHICH CANNOT BE SEEN, SUCH AS A HIDDEN DOOR, IT WILL TURN IT VISIBLE!
THERE IT IS! I'VE FOUND IT! NOW IF I CAN ONLY OPEN IT IN TIME!
EDITOR'S NOTE: A UNIQUE FACET OF SUE'S POWER IS THAT WHEN SHE MAKES SOMETHING ELSE VISIBLE, SHE BECOMES INVISIBLE, AND VICE VERSA!
LUCKILY, HE NEVER EXPECTED ME TO FIND IT! HE DIDN'T EVEN BOTHER TO LOCK THE EXIT DOOR!
I MADE IT.. JUST IN TIME!
AND, JUST A HEARTBEAT AWAY, THE VERY SAME NERVE GAS SEEPS INTO THE CHAMBER WHERE REED RICHARDS FINDS HIMSELF IMPRISONED...
THE WALLS ARE A NON-POROUS PLASTIC COMPOSITION! I CAN'T FIND ANY SPACES SMALL ENOUGH TO SQUEEZE MYSELF THROUGH!...AND YET, SOME SORT OF LETHAL GAS IS FINDING ITS WAY TO ME!


THE MOLE MAN IS FIENDISHLY CLEVER! HE EXPECTS I'LL WASTE PRECIOUS MINUTES LOOKING FOR AN ESCAPE OPENING, WHEN NONE EXISTS! BUT I'LL DO THE OPPOSITE...
I'LL CREATE MY **OWN** OPENING! OR ELSE... DIE TRYING! FIRST, I'LL ROLL MYSELF INTO A HARD TIGHT BALL, LIKE THIS...
THEN, BY HOLDING MY BREATH, AND TENSING MY MUSCLES, I'LL CAUSE MY SKIN TO EXPAND... EXERTING ENORMOUS PRESSURE AGAINST THE WALLS OF THE CHAMBER!
C-CAN'T HOLD MY BREATH MUCH LONGER! CHOKING...
I-I'VE FAILED... CAN'T... **WAIT!** THERE... I **DID** IT! I'M **THROUGH!**
EXHAUSTED, DUE TO HIS TREMENDOUS EFFORT, THE FABULOUS **MR. FANTASTIC** SLUMPS TO THE FLOOR FOR A FEW MOMENTS, AS HIS ASTOUNDING VITALITY SLOWLY RETURNS TO HIM!
AND THEN...
I'M IN THE MOLE MAN'S MAN CONTROL ROOM! THIS IS AN UNBELIEVABLE STROKE OF LUCK FOR ME!
IF I CAN JUST REARRANGE A FEW OF THESE CIRCUITS...
BUT WHAT OF THE STILL-TRAPPED **HUMAN TORCH?** A SHORT DISTANCE AWAY, HE STUDIES THE UNIQUE TRAP IN WHICH HE FINDS HIMSELF...
EVERY TIME I TRY TO FLAME ON, MY FLAME ACTIVATES ONE OF THESE PHOTOELECTRIC CELLS WHICH EXTINGUISHES IT BEFORE I CAN REALLY GET STARTED!
UH OH! BETTER FLAME OFF AGAIN! NOW **ICE SHEETS** ARE SHOOTING OUT AT ME!
NO, COME TO THINK OF IT, I CAN TURN THE MOLE MAN'S OWN TRAP **AGAINST** HIM!
BY LETTING THE ICE SOLIDIFY LONG ENOUGH, I CAN THEN SHAPE ONE OF THE HARDENED CHUNKS INTO A **WEAPON!** AND NOW...
...I CAN SHATTER THE MECHANISM WHICH TRIGGERS THE ANTI-FLAME UNITS, LIKE **THIS!**


NOW THERE'S NOTHING TO STOP ME FROM FLAMING ON AGAIN... BUT *THIS* TIME, IT'S FOR *KEEPS!*
I'LL BURN MY WAY OUT OF HERE IN NO TIME!
AT THAT SAME TIME THE MIGHTY *THING* FINDS HIS ESCAPE PATH BLOCKED BY HORDES OF DESPERATE SUBTERRANEANS...
LOOK, YOU JOKERS... I DON'T WANNA *HURT* YA BECAUSE I FIGURE YOU HAVEN'T GOT BRAINS ENOUGH TO KNOW WHAT YOU'RE DOIN'!
BUT MAMMA GRIMM'S LITTLE BOY BENJAMIN AIN'T GONNA BE USED AS A PUNCHING BAG BY *ANYBODY*... NOT EVEN AN ADORABLE BUNCH OF SUBTERRANEANS!!
SO WATCH YOURSELVES, KIDDIES... HERE'S WHERE I SHAKE YOU OFF... AND I DON'T MEAN MAYBE!
SECONDS LATER, AS THE DEFEATED CREATURES GO FLYING IN ALL DIRECTIONS, A THUNDEROUS MASS OF MIGHTY MUSCLE HEADS FOR THE IMPLACABLE MOLE MAN!
SO YOU ESCAPED MY "COTTON ROOM", EH? WELL, MY FEROCIOUS FRIEND, YOU'VE HEARD THE EXPRESSION, "OUT OF THE FRYING PAN..."
"...INTO THE FIRE!" AND THAT'S WHERE YOU ARE NOW, YOU UNGAINLY FOOL! SEE HOW EASILY I CAN PLUNGE MY DOMAIN INTO *DARKNESS!*
HEY, I CAN'T *SEE!* WHERE THE DICKENS *ARE* YA?? *OWW!!*
YOU *FORGOT* THAT I CAN FUNCTION IN THE DARK DUE TO MY HIGHLY DEVELOPED *RADAR SENSE!**
I'LL *STILL* GET YA!! I'LL CHARGE TOWARD THE SOUND OF YOUR VOICE, AND THEN... *HEY!?!* WHAT THE..?!!
*RADAR SENSE: ALTHOUGH HIS VISION IS WEAK, THE MOLE MAN IS ABLE TO SENSE THINGS IN THE DARK, AS FULLY EXPLAINED IN F.F. #1 (EDITOR)
BUT SUDDENLY...
LUCKY YOU HAVE A VOICE LIKE A FOG-HORN, BEN! I HEARD YOU JUST IN TIME!
WHEREVER YOU ARE, REACH OUT YOUR ARMS... GRAB MY HAND! HURRY, OLD FRIEND... DON'T *MISS!*
PARTNER, IF YOU PULL THIS OFF, I'LL TAKE EVERY ONE OF YOUR PINK LITTLE FINGERS AND *KISS* 'EM!
SECONDS LATER, AS BASHFUL BENJAMIN CLIMBS UP A HASTILY IMPROVISED RAMP MADE OF REED RICHARDS' ARM...
OF COURSE, YOU'RE NOT GONNA *HOLD* ME TO ANYTHING I PROMISED WHILE I WAS UNDER THE INFLUENCE OF PURE *PANIC*, ARE YA?
JUST KEEP CLIMBING, PAL! YOU'RE NOT GETTING ANY *LIGHTER*, YOU KNOW!


BLAST THEM! RICHARDS SAVED THE LUMBERING THING!
BUT I'LL GET THEM YET! THE ADVANTAGE IS STILL MINE IN THE DARK!
TOO SLOW, LITTLE MAN! YOU FORGOT I CAN HEAR THE RUSTLE OF YOUR STICK WHEN YOU SWING IT!
WHOOSH!
THANKS, REEDY BOY! BUT I'M UP HERE NOW, AND' I'LL HANDLE OL' MOLEY! I'LL KEEP SWINGIN' 'TILL I CONNECT WITH 'IM! HEY! WHERE IN SAM HILL DID HE GO!?
CAN'T TAKE A CHANCE OF THAT APE-LIKE BRUTE STRIKING ME! I'LL TRY ANOTHER PLAN!!
WHERE ARE YOU, BEN? OH, THERE'S YOUR HAND!
C'MON DOWN, GOOD OL' BUDDY! THAT HOODED WEASEL IS HERE SOMEWHERE! IF WE COULD ONLY FIND THE LIGHT SWITCH!
HAH! BEFORE THEY FIND ANY SWITCHES, THEY'LL BOTH BE HELPLESS BENEATH A TEN-TON BOULDER!
HOLD IT! I HEAR SOMETHING FALLING!
AW! IT'S PROBABLY YOUR SOCKS! PULL 'EM UP, AND LET'S GET OUTTA HERE!
AT THAT EXACT MICROSECOND, THE HUMAN TORCH BLAZES IN! SEEING THE DANGER IN THE LIGHT OF HIS FLAME, HE ACTS WITH THE SPEED OF THOUGHT...
BULL'S EYE! NOTHING CAN WITHSTAND THE FORCE OF MY LOW INTENSITY SUPER-NOVA BLAST!
DIDN'T EXPECT MY FLAME TO LIGHT THE JOINT UP, DID YOU?
HEY! DIDN'T ANYONE EVER TEACH YOU IT'S IMPOLITE TO LEAVE IN THE MIDDLE OF A CONVERSATION?
WITLESS YOUTH! LAUGH WHILE YOU MAY! SOON, YOUR HUMOR WILL CHANGE TO FEAR!!
THEY HAVE ESCAPED MY MANY TRAPS, BUT THE FINAL VICTORY SHALL STILL BE MINE! ONCE I REACH MY UNDERGROUND TUNNELS, NOTHING THAT LIVES CAN CATCH ME!
AND NOW, NO POWER ON EARTH CAN REACH ME IN TIME TO PREVENT ME FROM SINKING THE SURFACE CITIES AND STARTING THE NEXT WORLD WAR!


REED! I'VE FOUND OUR U-CAR! IT'S JUST PAST THIS CAVERN!
QUICK! WE'VE GOT TO REACH IT AND LEAVE THE ISLE! THERE'S NOT A SECOND TO LOSE!
BUT WHAT ABOUT THE MOLE MAN? HE CAN STILL SINK ALL OUR CITIES!
SOME LEADER YOU ARE! CHICKENIN' OUT AT THE LAST MINUTE! PHOOEY!
NO TIME TO EXPLAIN! DO AS I SAY! THAT'S AN ORDER!!
LOOK OUT! HERE COME THE SUBTERRANEANS AGAIN!
YOU THREE PLAY FOLLOW-THE-LEADER! I'LL HANDLE THESE CHARACTERS!
HEY, LOOKA ME! I'M A HUMAN BATTERING RAM! WONDER IF ED SULLIVAN COULD USE ME ON HIS SHOW!
ENOUGH, BEN! INTO THE U-CAR! NOW I SAY!
I'VE NEVER SEEN REED SO TENSE... SO HIGH-STRUNG!
...IT'S AS THOUGH HE KNOWS SOMETHING THAT HE HASN'T TOLD US! BUT WHAT CAN IT BE?!
ALL RIGHT... WE'RE ALL IN! NOW GIVE HER THE GUN! MOVE IT, BEN! LET'S GET OUT OF HERE!
AND, MANY LEAGUES BELOW, IN THE MAIN CHAMBER OF THE MOLE MAN'S SUBTERRANEAN KINGDOM...
THERE IS MY CONTROL DEVICE... WITH NOTHING TO STOP ME FROM ACTIVATING IT NOW!
GOODBYE, NEW YORK! GOODBYE, MOSCOW! WHEN NEXT I APPEAR ON THE SURFACE, ALL OF EARTH SHALL BE MINE!
AND SO, THE MOLE MAN DEPRESSES THE DETONATE BUTTON, LITTLE DREAMING AS HE DOES SO...
...THAT MR. FANTASTIC HAD PREVIOSLY REARRANGED THE MAIN CIRCUIT WIRING, SO THAT NOTHING SINKS BENEATH THE EARTH'S SURFACE EXCEPT THE MOLE MAN'S ISLE ITSELF, DESTROYING ALL OF HIS COMPLEX SCIENTIFIC EQUIPMENT IN ONE MAD INUNDATING TIDE OF WATER...
SO THAT'S WHY REEDY-BOY WANTED US TO SKEEDADDLE OFF THE ISLE!
OL' BOSS MAN FIXED IT SO THAT SHORTY BLEW HIS OWN LITTLE ISLAND RIGHT OFF THE MAP! HOW ABOUT THAT!
THAT'S IT FOR NOW, L'IL FRIEND! BUT, IF YOU CAN TEAR YOURSELF AWAY FROM THE HARVARD CLASSICS, TRY US AGAIN NEXT ISH... THERE'S ALWAYS THE SLIM CHANCE THAT YOU'LL ENJOY IT!


THE WORLD'S GREATEST COMIC MAGAZINE!
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IND.
23 FEB.
"THE MASTER PLAN OF DOCTOR DOOM!"
ANOTHER MIGHTY MILESTONE IN THE MARVEL AGE OF COMICS!

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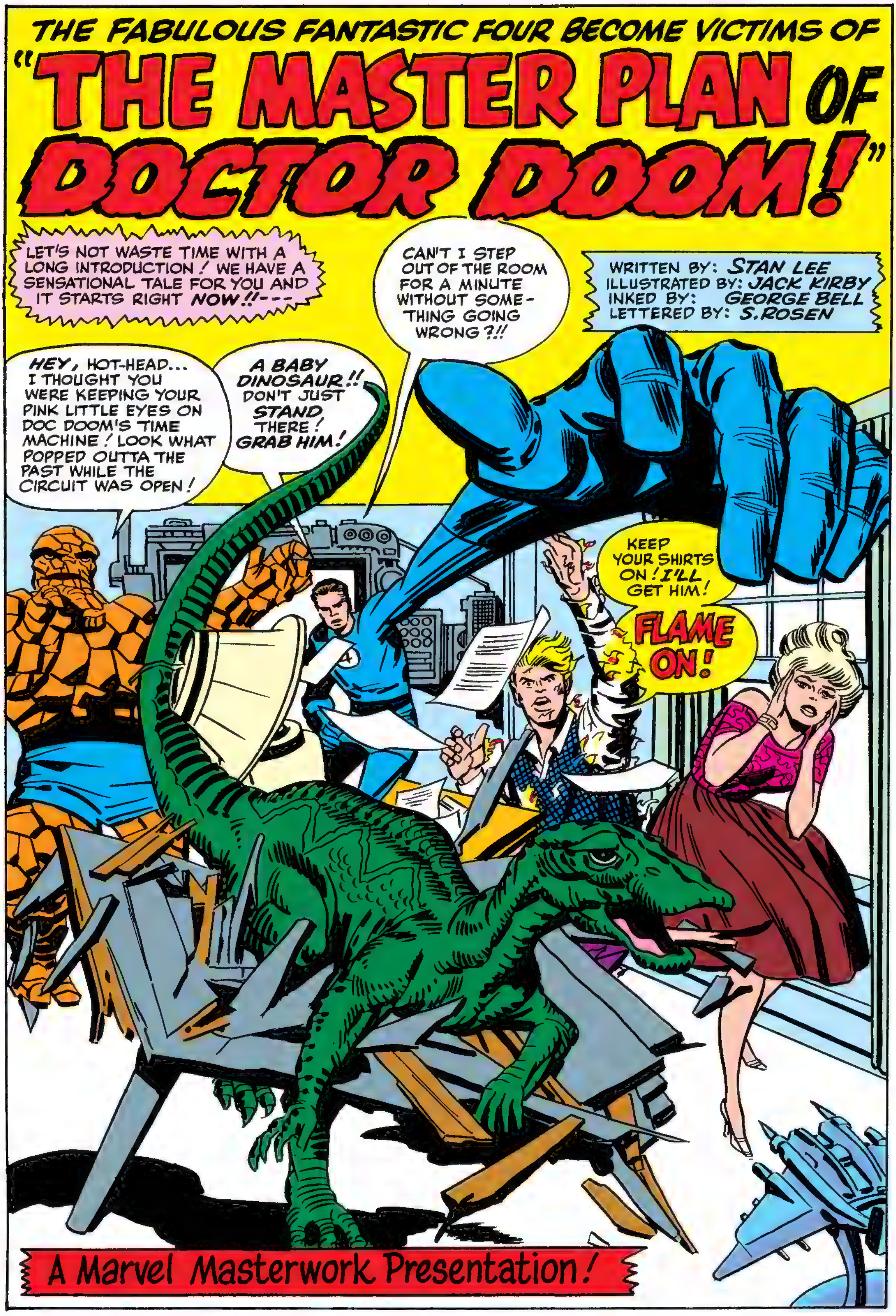
THE FABULOUS FANTASTIC FOUR BECOME VICTIMS OF
"THE MASTER PLAN OF DOCTOR DOOM!"
LET'S NOT WASTE TIME WITH A LONG INTRODUCTION! WE HAVE A SENSATIONAL TALE FOR YOU AND IT STARTS RIGHT NOW!!---
CAN'T I STEP OUT OF THE ROOM FOR A MINUTE WITHOUT SOME-THING GOING WRONG?!!
WRITTEN BY: STAN LEE
ILLUSTRATED BY: JACK KIRBY
INKED BY: GEORGE BELL
LETTERED BY: S. ROSEN
HEY, HOT-HEAD... I THOUGHT YOU WERE KEEPING YOUR PINK LITTLE EYES ON DOC DOOM'S TIME MACHINE! LOOK WHAT POPPED OUTTA THE PAST WHILE THE CIRCUIT WAS OPEN!
A BABY DINOSAUR!! DON'T JUST STAND THERE! GRAB HIM!
KEEP YOUR SHIRTS ON! I'LL GET HIM!
FLAME ON!
A Marvel Masterwork Presentation!

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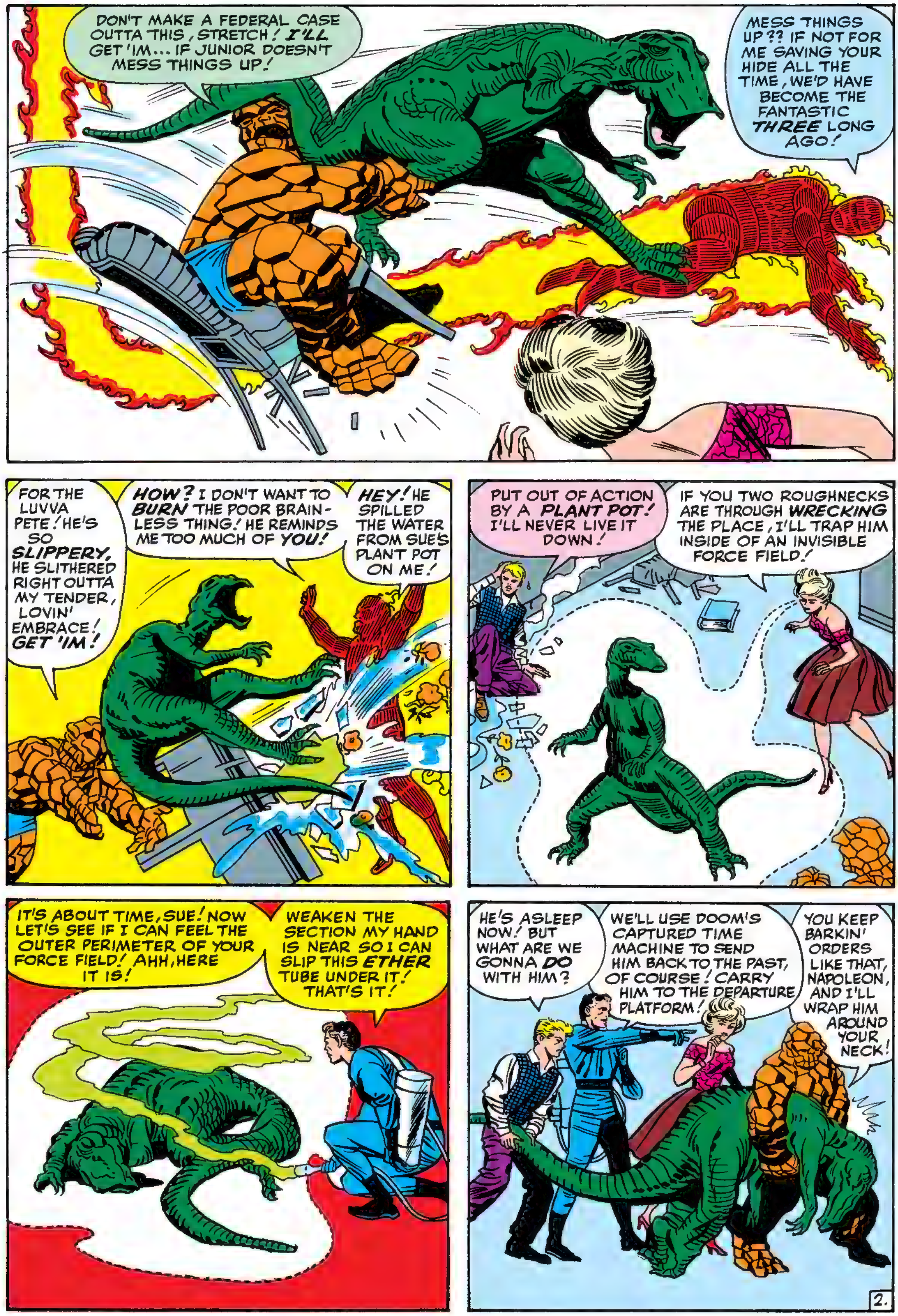
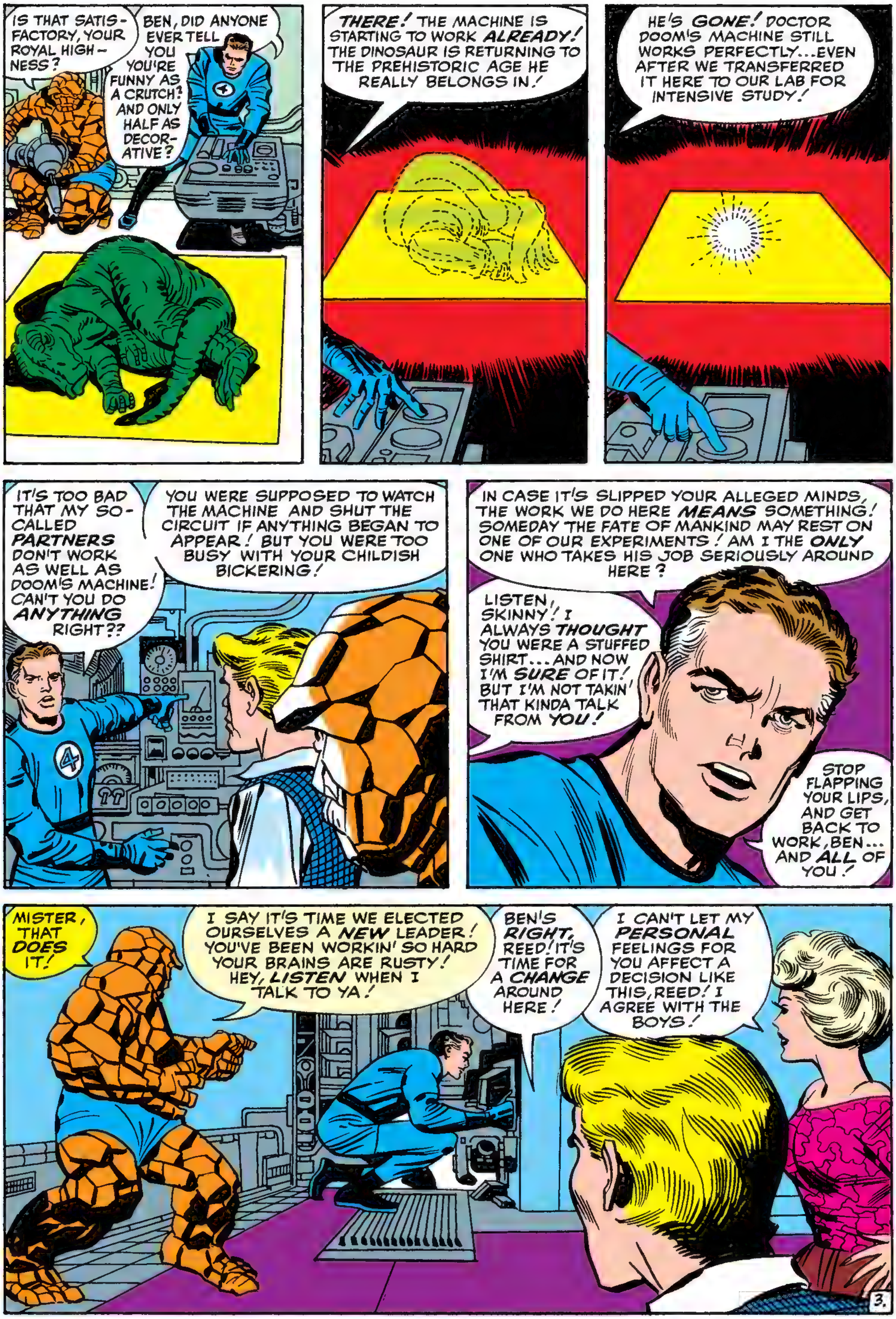
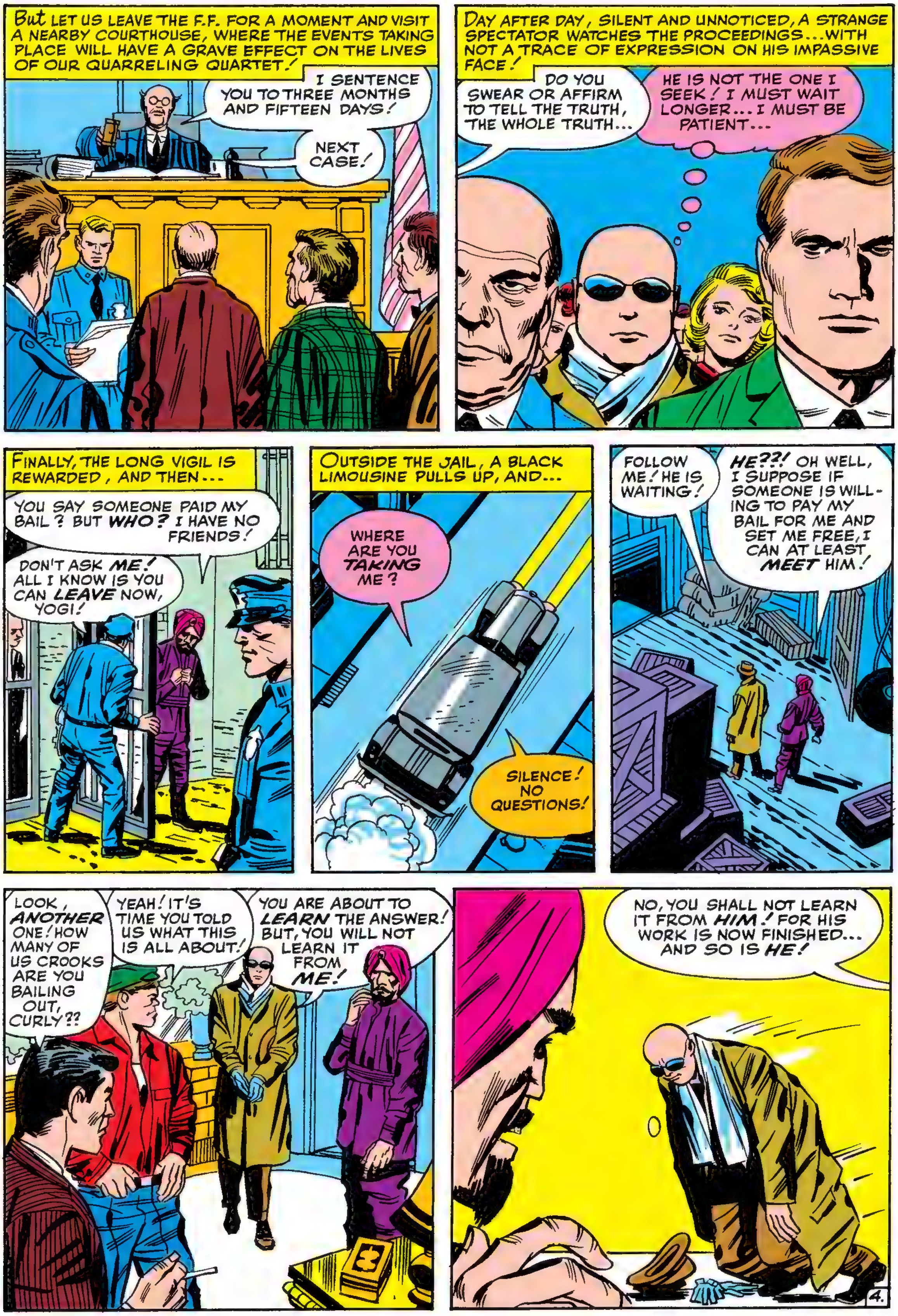

DON'T MAKE A FEDERAL CASE OUTTA THIS, STRETCH! I'LL GET 'IM... IF JUNIOR DOESN'T MESS THINGS UP!
MESS THINGS UP?? IF NOT FOR ME SAVING YOUR HIDE ALL THE TIME, WE'D HAVE BECOME THE FANTASTIC THREE LONG AGO!
FOR THE LUVVA PETE! HE'S SO SLIPPERY, HE SLITHERED RIGHT OUTTA MY TENDER, LOVIN' EMBRACE! GET 'IM!
HOW? I DON'T WANT TO BURN THE POOR BRAINLESS THING! HE REMINDS ME TOO MUCH OF YOU!
HEY! HE SPILLED THE WATER FROM SUE'S PLANT POT ON ME!
PUT OUT OF ACTION BY A PLANT POT! I'LL NEVER LIVE IT DOWN!
IF YOU TWO ROUGHNECKS ARE THROUGH WRECKING THE PLACE, I'LL TRAP HIM INSIDE OF AN INVISIBLE FORCE FIELD!
IT'S ABOUT TIME, SUE! NOW LET'S SEE IF I CAN FEEL THE OUTER PERIMETER OF YOUR FORCE FIELD! AHH, HERE IT IS!
WEAKEN THE SECTION MY HAND IS NEAR SO I CAN SLIP THIS ETHER TUBE UNDER IT! THAT'S IT!
HE'S ASLEEP NOW! BUT WHAT ARE WE GONNA DO WITH HIM?
WE'LL USE DOOM'S CAPTURED TIME MACHINE TO SEND HIM BACK TO THE PAST, OF COURSE! CARRY HIM TO THE DEPARTURE PLATFORM!
YOU KEEP BARKIN' ORDERS LIKE THAT, NAPOLEON, AND I'LL WRAP HIM AROUND YOUR NECK!


IS THAT SATISFACTORY, YOUR ROYAL HIGHNESS?
BEN, DID ANYONE EVER TELL YOU YOU'RE FUNNY AS A CRUTCH? AND ONLY HALF AS DECORATIVE?
THERE! THE MACHINE IS STARTING TO WORK *ALREADY!* THE DINOSAUR IS RETURNING TO THE PREHISTORIC AGE HE REALLY BELONGS IN!
HE'S *GONE!* DOCTOR DOOM'S MACHINE STILL WORKS PERFECTLY...EVEN AFTER WE TRANSFERRED IT HERE TO OUR LAB FOR INTENSIVE STUDY!
IT'S TOO BAD THAT MY SO-CALLED *PARTNERS* DON'T WORK AS WELL AS DOOM'S MACHINE! CAN'T YOU DO *ANYTHING* RIGHT??
YOU WERE SUPPOSED TO WATCH THE MACHINE AND SHUT THE CIRCUIT IF ANYTHING BEGAN TO APPEAR! BUT YOU WERE TOO BUSY WITH YOUR CHILDISH BICKERING!
IN CASE IT'S SLIPPED YOUR ALLEGED MINDS, THE WORK WE DO HERE *MEANS* SOMETHING! SOMEDAY THE FATE OF MANKIND MAY REST ON ONE OF OUR EXPERIMENTS! AM I THE *ONLY* ONE WHO TAKES HIS JOB SERIOUSLY AROUND HERE?
LISTEN, SKINNY! I ALWAYS *THOUGHT* YOU WERE A STUFFED SHIRT...AND NOW I'M *SURE* OF IT! BUT I'M NOT TAKIN' THAT KINDA TALK FROM *YOU!*
STOP FLAPPING YOUR LIPS, AND GET BACK TO WORK, BEN... AND *ALL* OF YOU!
MISTER, THAT *DOES* IT!
I SAY IT'S TIME WE ELECTED OURSELVES A *NEW* LEADER! YOU'VE BEEN WORKIN' SO HARD YOUR BRAINS ARE RUSTY! HEY, *LISTEN* WHEN I TALK TO YA!
BEN'S *RIGHT,* REED! IT'S TIME FOR A *CHANGE* AROUND HERE!
I CAN'T LET MY *PERSONAL* FEELINGS FOR YOU AFFECT A DECISION LIKE THIS, REED! I AGREE WITH THE BOYS!


But let us leave the F.F. for a moment and visit a nearby courthouse, where the events taking place will have a grave effect on the lives of our quarreling quartet!
I sentence you to three months and fifteen days!
Next case!
Day after day, silent and unnoticed, a strange spectator watches the proceedings...with not a trace of expression on his impassive face!
Do you swear or affirm to tell the truth, the whole truth...
He is not the one I seek! I must wait longer... I must be patient...
Finally, the long vigil is rewarded, and then...
You say someone paid my bail? But who? I have no friends!
Don't ask me! All I know is you can leave now, Yogi!
Outside the jail, a black limousine pulls up, and...
Where are you taking me?
Silence! No questions!
Follow me! He is waiting!
He??! Oh well, I suppose if someone is willing to pay my bail for me and set me free, I can at least meet him!
Look, another one! How many of us crooks are you bailing out, Curly??
Yeah! It's time you told us what this is all about!
You are about to learn the answer! But, you will not learn it from me!
No, you shall not learn it from him! For his work is now finished... and so is he!
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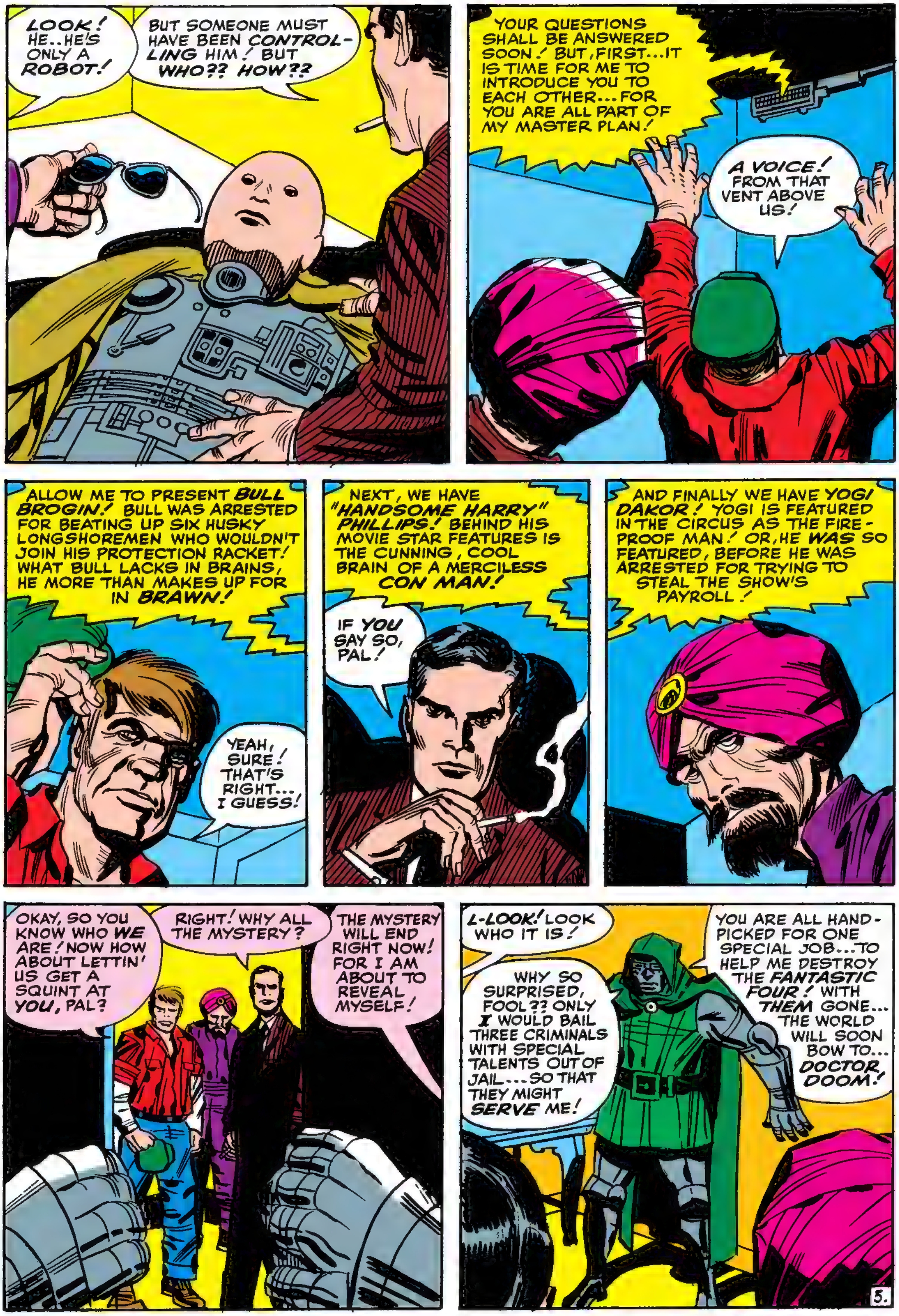
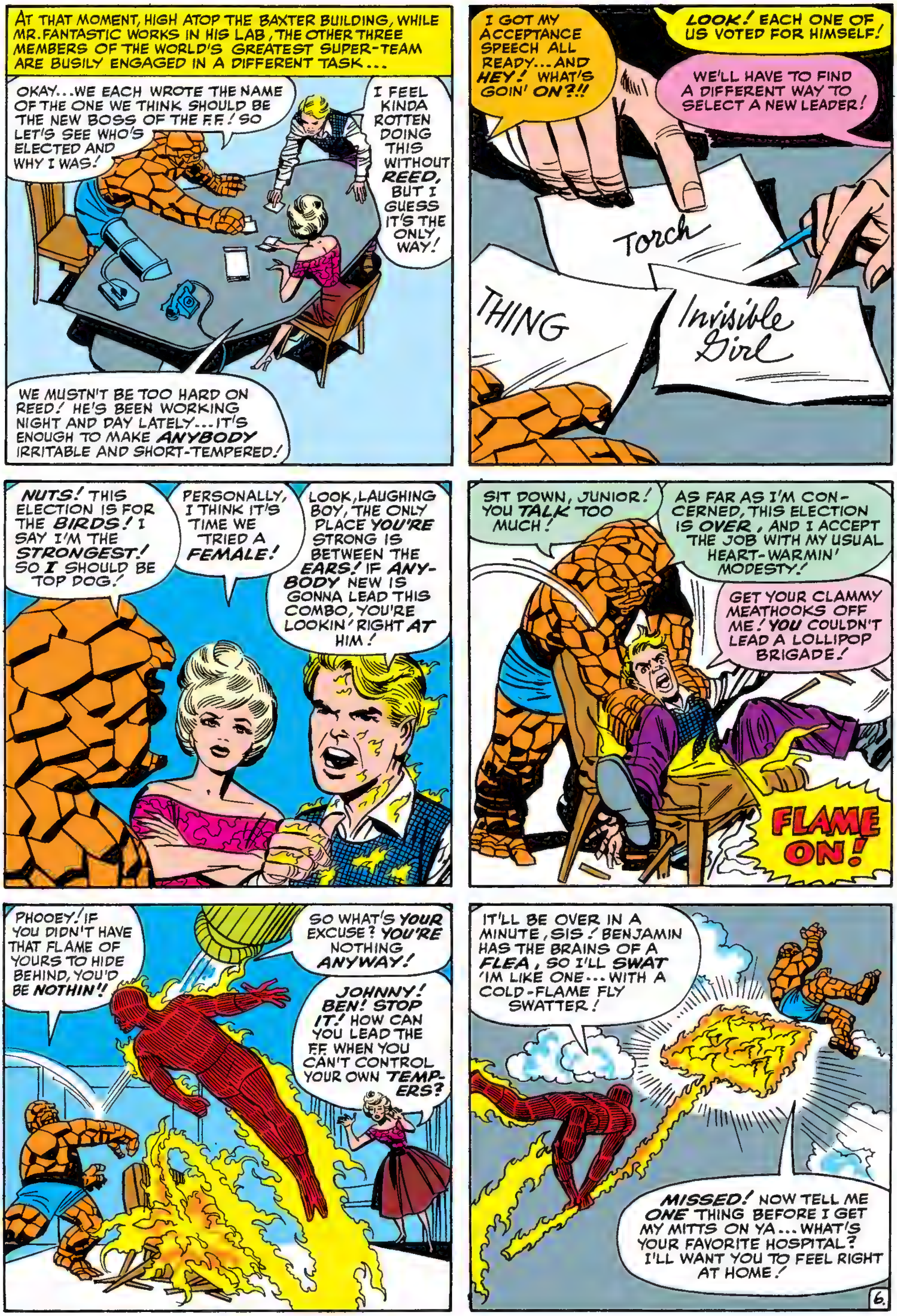
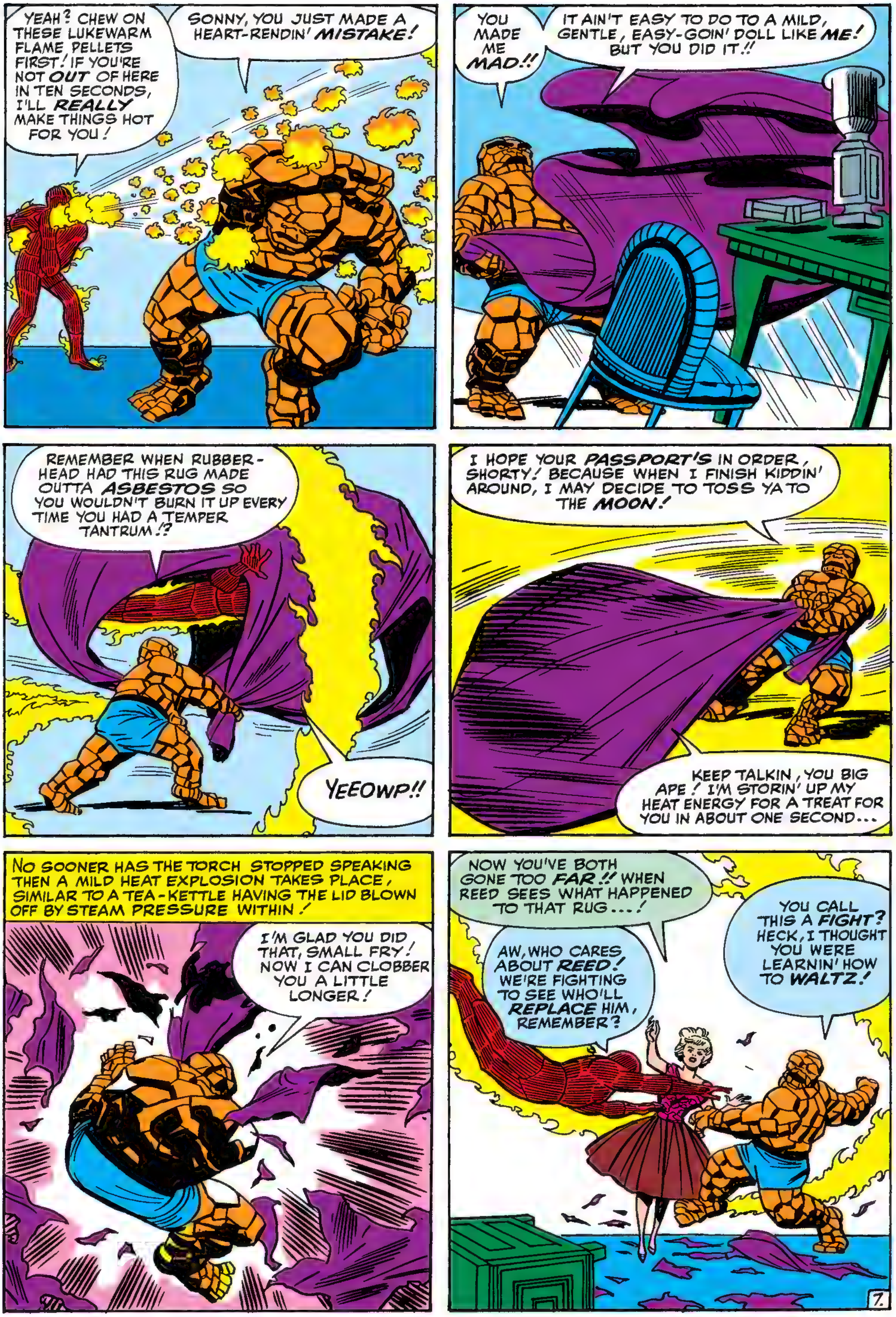
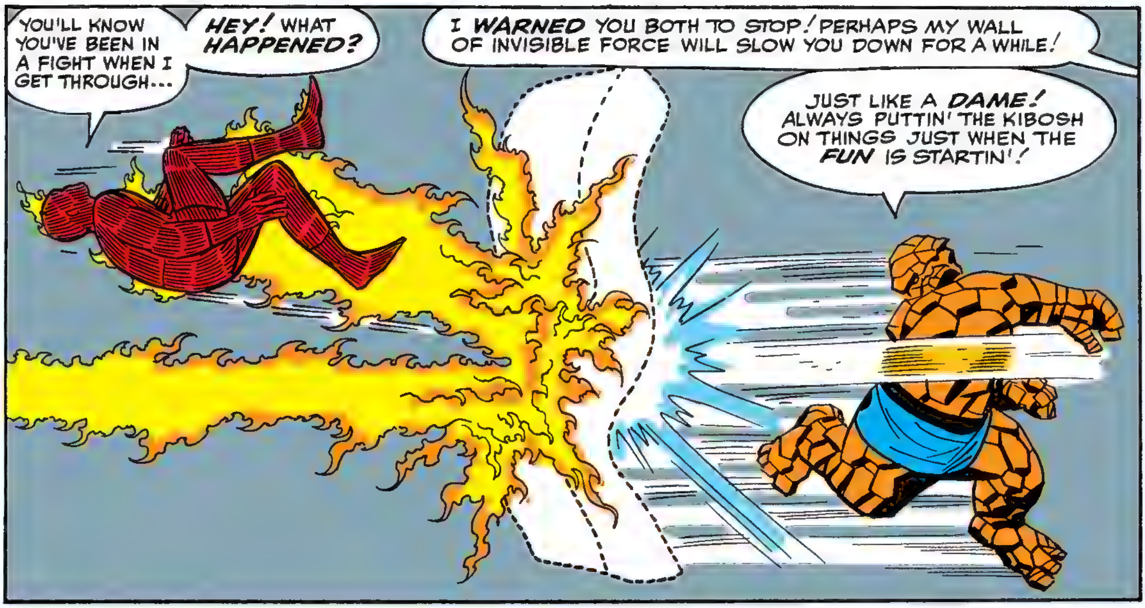
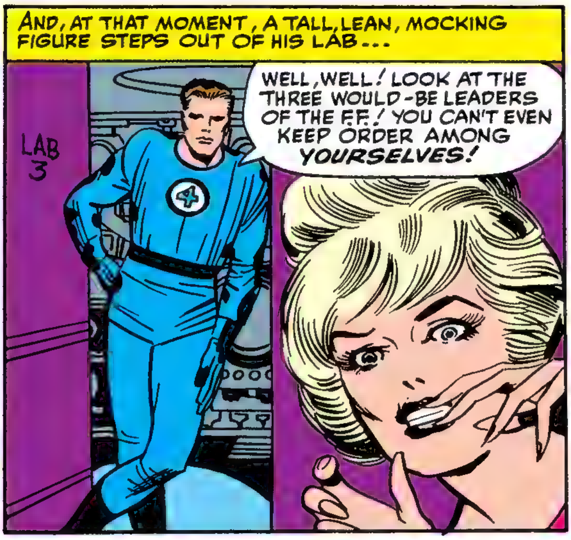
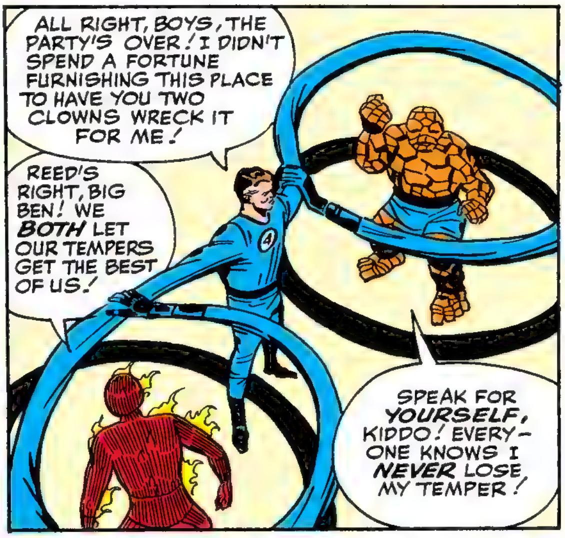

LOOK! HE..HE'S ONLY A ROBOT!
BUT SOMEONE MUST HAVE BEEN CONTROLLING HIM! BUT WHO?? HOW??
YOUR QUESTIONS SHALL BE ANSWERED SOON! BUT, FIRST...IT IS TIME FOR ME TO INTRODUCE YOU TO EACH OTHER...FOR YOU ARE ALL PART OF MY MASTER PLAN!
A VOICE! FROM THAT VENT ABOVE US!
ALLOW ME TO PRESENT BULL BROGIN! BULL WAS ARRESTED FOR BEATING UP SIX HUSKY LONGSHOREMEN WHO WOULDN'T JOIN HIS PROTECTION RACKET! WHAT BULL LACKS IN BRAINS, HE MORE THAN MAKES UP FOR IN BRAWN!
YEAH, SURE! THAT'S RIGHT... I GUESS!
NEXT, WE HAVE "HANDSOME HARRY" PHILLIPS! BEHIND HIS MOVIE STAR FEATURES IS THE CUNNING, COOL BRAIN OF A MERCILESS CON MAN!
IF YOU SAY SO, PAL!
AND FINALLY WE HAVE YOGI DAKOR! YOGI IS FEATURED IN THE CIRCUS AS THE FIRE-PROOF MAN! OR, HE WAS SO FEATURED, BEFORE HE WAS ARRESTED FOR TRYING TO STEAL THE SHOW'S PAYROLL!
OKAY, SO YOU KNOW WHO WE ARE! NOW HOW ABOUT LETTIN' US GET A SQUINT AT YOU, PAL?
RIGHT! WHY ALL THE MYSTERY?
THE MYSTERY WILL END RIGHT NOW! FOR I AM ABOUT TO REVEAL MYSELF!
L-LOOK! LOOK WHO IT IS!
WHY SO SURPRISED, FOOL?? ONLY I WOULD BAIL THREE CRIMINALS WITH SPECIAL TALENTS OUT OF JAIL...SO THAT THEY MIGHT SERVE ME!
YOU ARE ALL HAND-PICKED FOR ONE SPECIAL JOB...TO HELP ME DESTROY THE FANTASTIC FOUR! WITH THEM GONE... THE WORLD WILL SOON BOW TO... DOCTOR DOOM!

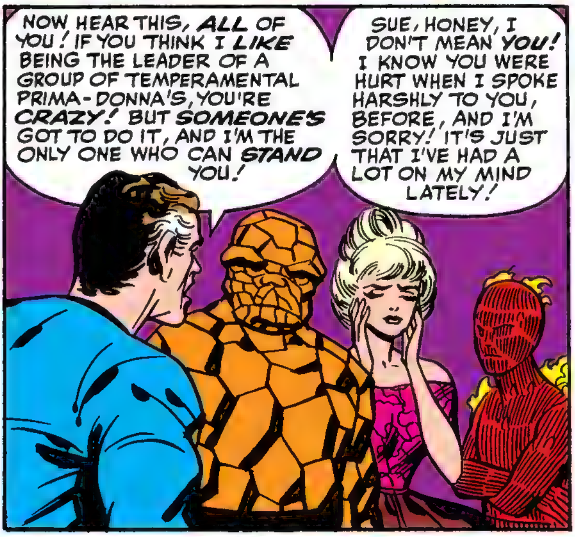

AT THAT MOMENT, HIGH ATOP THE BAXTER BUILDING, WHILE MR. FANTASTIC WORKS IN HIS LAB, THE OTHER THREE MEMBERS OF THE WORLD'S GREATEST SUPER-TEAM ARE BUSILY ENGAGED IN A DIFFERENT TASK...
OKAY... WE EACH WROTE THE NAME OF THE ONE WE THINK SHOULD BE THE NEW BOSS OF THE F.F.! SO LET'S SEE WHO'S ELECTED AND WHY I WAS!
I FEEL KINDA ROTTEN DOING THIS WITHOUT REED, BUT I GUESS IT'S THE ONLY WAY!
WE MUSTN'T BE TOO HARD ON REED! HE'S BEEN WORKING NIGHT AND DAY LATELY... IT'S ENOUGH TO MAKE ANYBODY IRRITABLE AND SHORT-TEMPERED!
I GOT MY ACCEPTANCE SPEECH ALL READY... AND HEY! WHAT'S GOIN' ON?!!
LOOK! EACH ONE OF US VOTED FOR HIMSELF!
WE'LL HAVE TO FIND A DIFFERENT WAY TO SELECT A NEW LEADER!
Torch
THING
Invisible Girl
NUTS! THIS ELECTION IS FOR THE BIRDS! I SAY I'M THE STRONGEST! SO I SHOULD BE TOP DOG!
PERSONALLY, I THINK IT'S TIME WE TRIED A FEMALE!
LOOK, LAUGHING BOY, THE ONLY PLACE YOU'RE STRONG IS BETWEEN THE EARS! IF ANYBODY NEW IS GONNA LEAD THIS COMBO, YOU'RE LOOKIN' RIGHT AT HIM!
SIT DOWN, JUNIOR! YOU TALK TOO MUCH!
AS FAR AS I'M CONCERNED, THIS ELECTION IS OVER, AND I ACCEPT THE JOB WITH MY USUAL HEART-WARMIN' MODESTY!
GET YOUR CLAMMY MEATHOOKS OFF ME! YOU COULDN'T LEAD A LOLLIPOP BRIGADE!
FLAME ON!
PHOOEY! IF YOU DIDN'T HAVE THAT FLAME OF YOURS TO HIDE BEHIND, YOU'D BE NOTHIN'!
SO WHAT'S YOUR EXCUSE? YOU'RE NOTHING ANYWAY!
JOHNNY! BEN! STOP IT! HOW CAN YOU LEAD THE F.F. WHEN YOU CAN'T CONTROL YOUR OWN TEMPERS?
IT'LL BE OVER IN A MINUTE, SIS! BENJAMIN HAS THE BRAINS OF A FLEA, SO I'LL SWAT 'IM LIKE ONE... WITH A COLD-FLAME FLY SWATTER!
MISSED! NOW TELL ME ONE THING BEFORE I GET MY MITTS ON YA... WHAT'S YOUR FAVORITE HOSPITAL? I'LL WANT YOU TO FEEL RIGHT AT HOME!

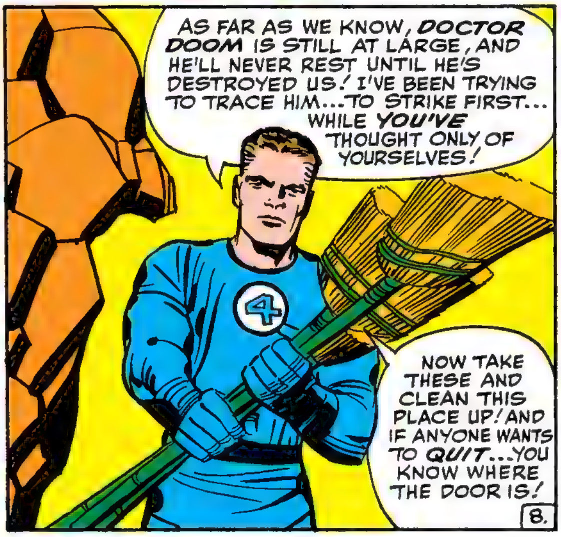

YEAH? CHEW ON THESE LUKEWARM FLAME PELLETS FIRST! IF YOU'RE NOT *OUT* OF HERE IN TEN SECONDS, I'LL *REALLY* MAKE THINGS HOT FOR YOU!
SONNY, YOU JUST MADE A HEART-RENDIN' *MISTAKE!*
YOU MADE ME *MAD!!*
IT AIN'T EASY TO DO TO A MILD, GENTLE, EASY-GOIN' DOLL LIKE *ME!* BUT YOU DID IT!!
REMEMBER WHEN RUBBER-HEAD HAD THIS RUG MADE OUTTA *ASBESTOS* SO YOU WOULDN'T BURN IT UP EVERY TIME YOU HAD A TEMPER TANTRUM!?
YEEOWP!!
I HOPE YOUR *PASSPORT'S* IN ORDER, SHORTY! BECAUSE WHEN I FINISH KIDDIN' AROUND, I MAY DECIDE TO TOSS YA TO THE *MOON!*
KEEP TALKIN, YOU BIG APE! I'M STORIN' UP MY HEAT ENERGY FOR A TREAT FOR YOU IN ABOUT ONE SECOND...
NO SOONER HAS THE TORCH STOPPED SPEAKING THEN A MILD HEAT EXPLOSION TAKES PLACE, SIMILAR TO A TEA-KETTLE HAVING THE LID BLOWN OFF BY STEAM PRESSURE WITHIN!
I'M GLAD YOU DID THAT, SMALL FRY! NOW I CAN CLOBBER YOU A LITTLE LONGER!
NOW YOU'VE BOTH GONE TOO *FAR!!* WHEN REED SEES WHAT HAPPENED TO THAT RUG...!
AW, WHO CARES ABOUT *REED!* WE'RE FIGHTING TO SEE WHO'LL *REPLACE* HIM, REMEMBER?
YOU CALL THIS A *FIGHT?* HECK, I THOUGHT YOU WERE LEARNIN' HOW TO *WALTZ!*

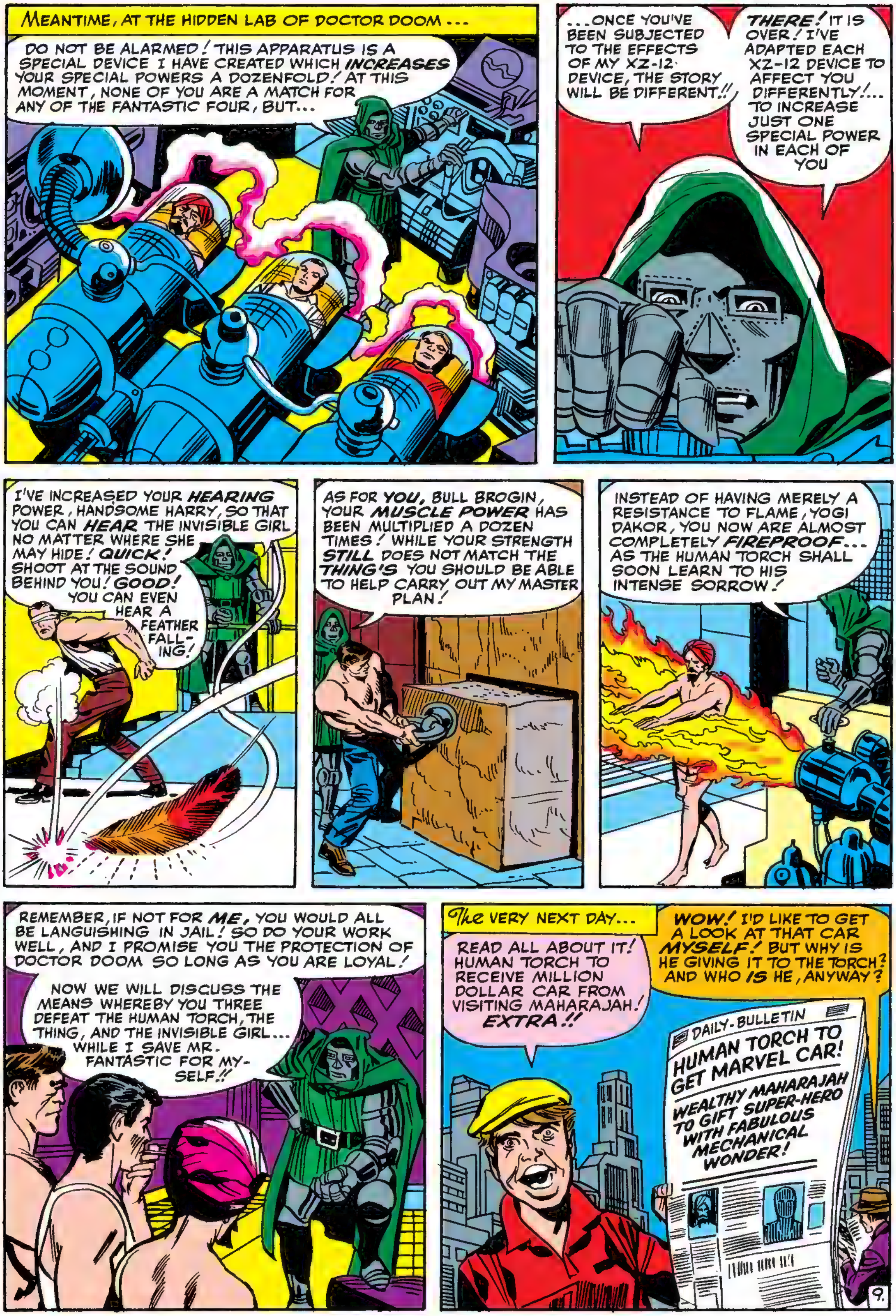

YOU'LL KNOW YOU'VE BEEN IN A FIGHT WHEN I GET THROUGH...
HEY! WHAT HAPPENED?
I WARNED YOU BOTH TO STOP! PERHAPS MY WALL OF INVISIBLE FORCE WILL SLOW YOU DOWN FOR A WHILE!
JUST LIKE A DAME! ALWAYS PUTTIN' THE KIBOSH ON THINGS JUST WHEN THE FUN IS STARTIN'!

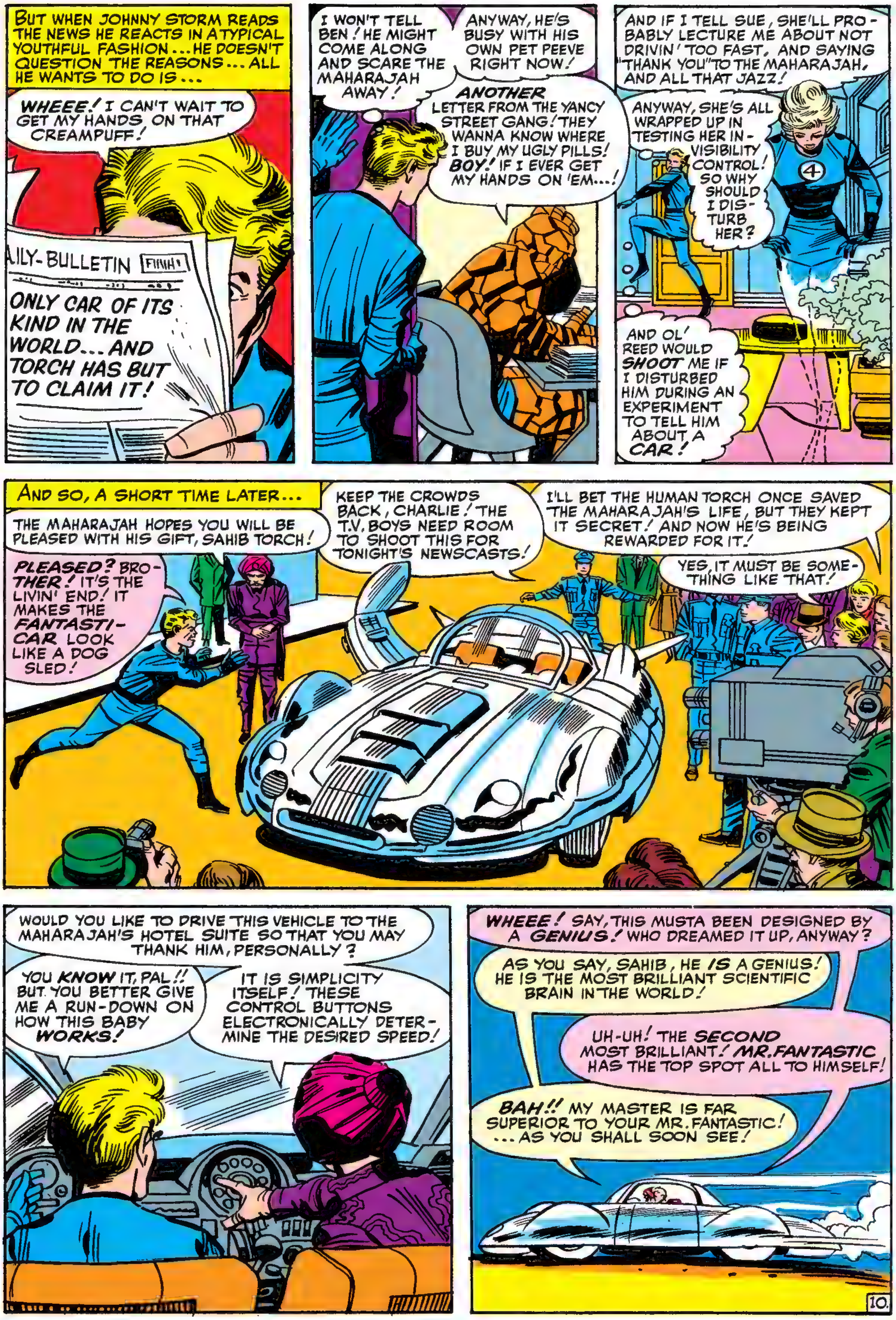

AND, AT THAT MOMENT, A TALL, LEAN, MOCKING FIGURE STEPS OUT OF HIS LAB...
LAB 3
WELL, WELL! LOOK AT THE THREE WOULD-BE LEADERS OF THE F.F.! YOU CAN'T EVEN KEEP ORDER AMONG YOURSELVES!

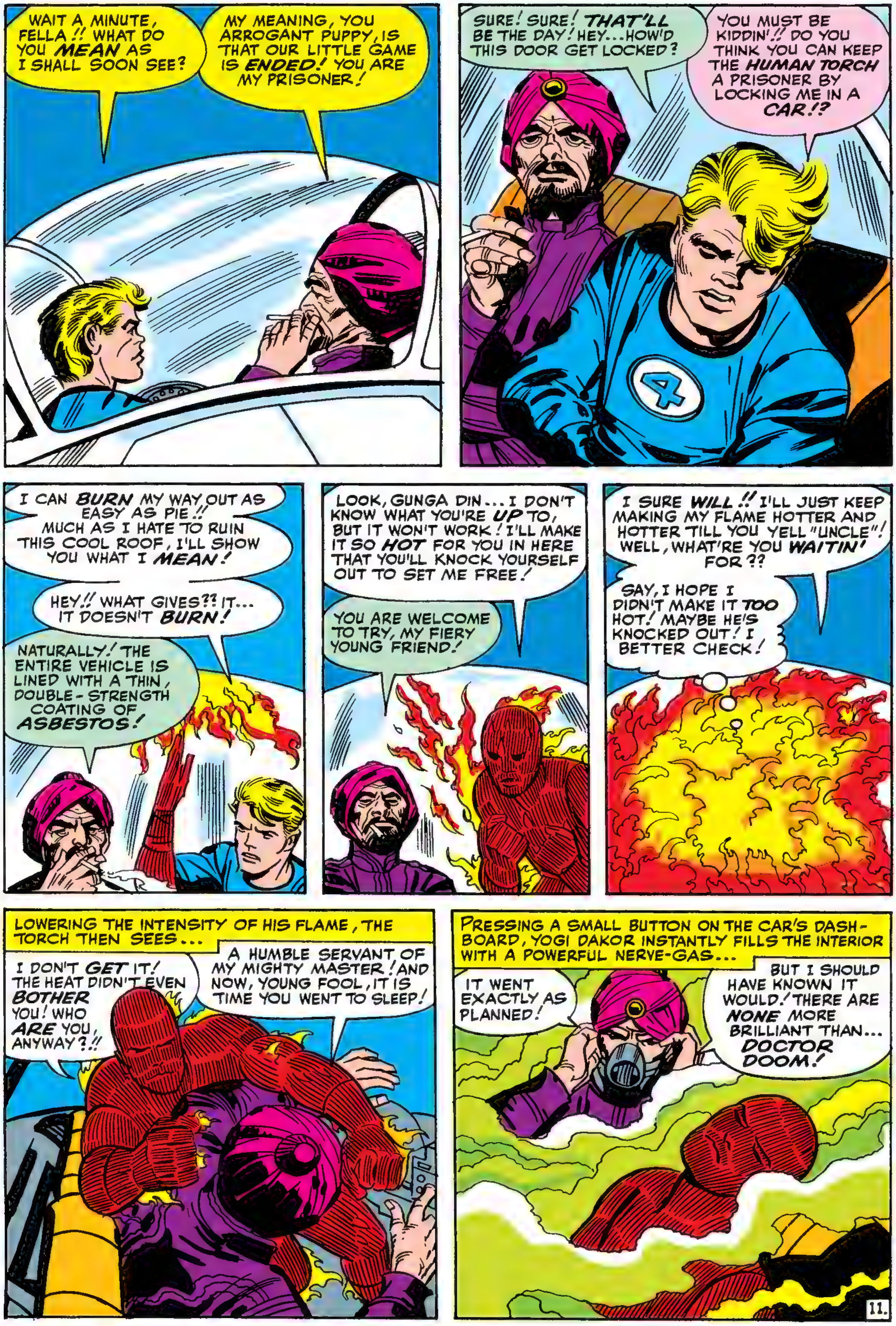

ALL RIGHT, BOYS, THE PARTY'S OVER! I DIDN'T SPEND A FORTUNE FURNISHING THIS PLACE TO HAVE YOU TWO CLOWNS WRECK IT FOR ME!
REED'S RIGHT, BIG BEN! WE BOTH LET OUR TEMPERS GET THE BEST OF US!
SPEAK FOR YOURSELF, KIDDO! EVERYONE KNOWS I NEVER LOSE MY TEMPER!

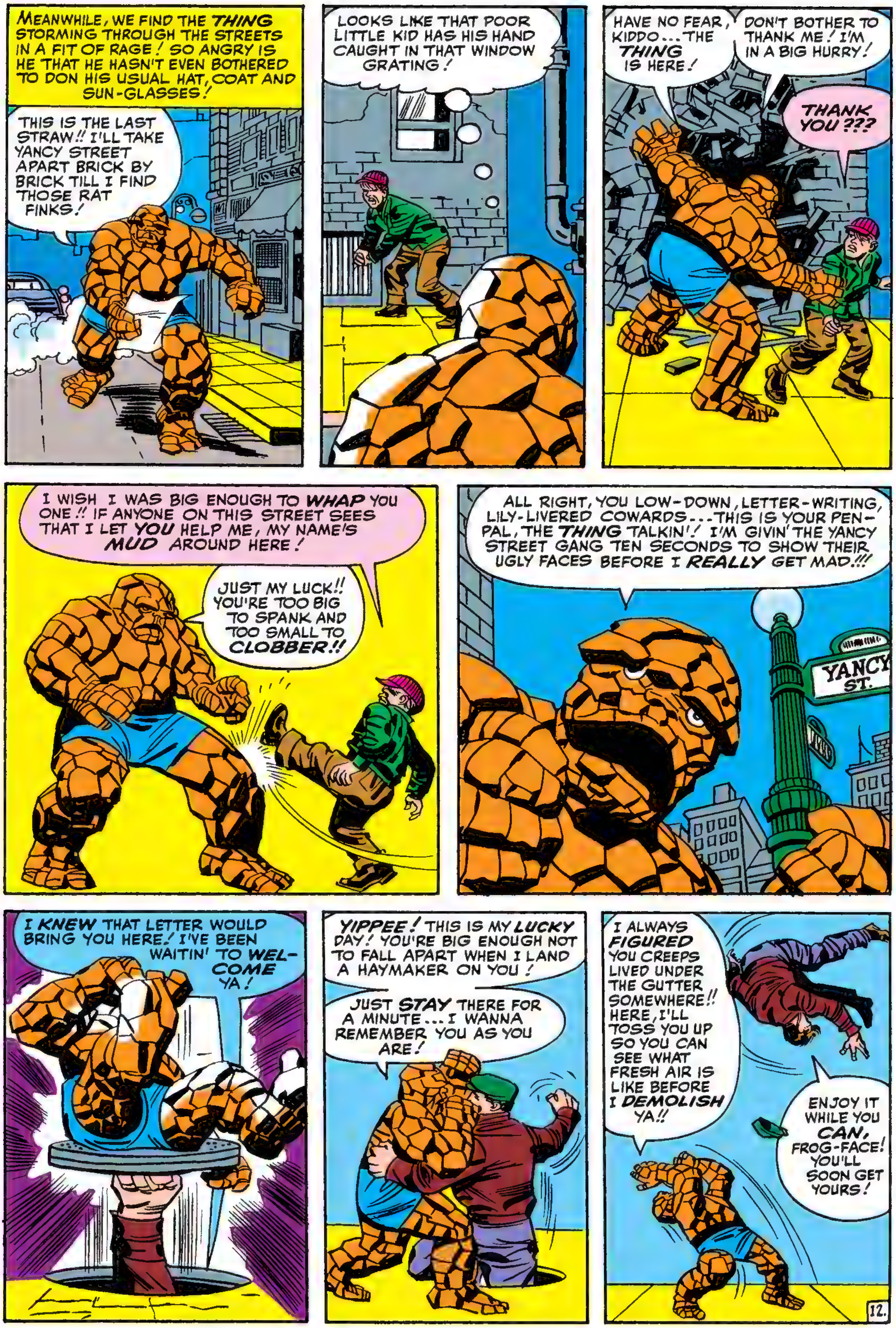

NOW HEAR THIS, ALL OF YOU! IF YOU THINK I LIKE BEING THE LEADER OF A GROUP OF TEMPERAMENTAL PRIMA-DONNA'S, YOU'RE CRAZY! BUT SOMEONE'S GOT TO DO IT, AND I'M THE ONLY ONE WHO CAN STAND YOU!
SUE, HONEY, I DON'T MEAN YOU! I KNOW YOU WERE HURT WHEN I SPOKE HARSHLY TO YOU, BEFORE, AND I'M SORRY! IT'S JUST THAT I'VE HAD A LOT ON MY MIND LATELY!

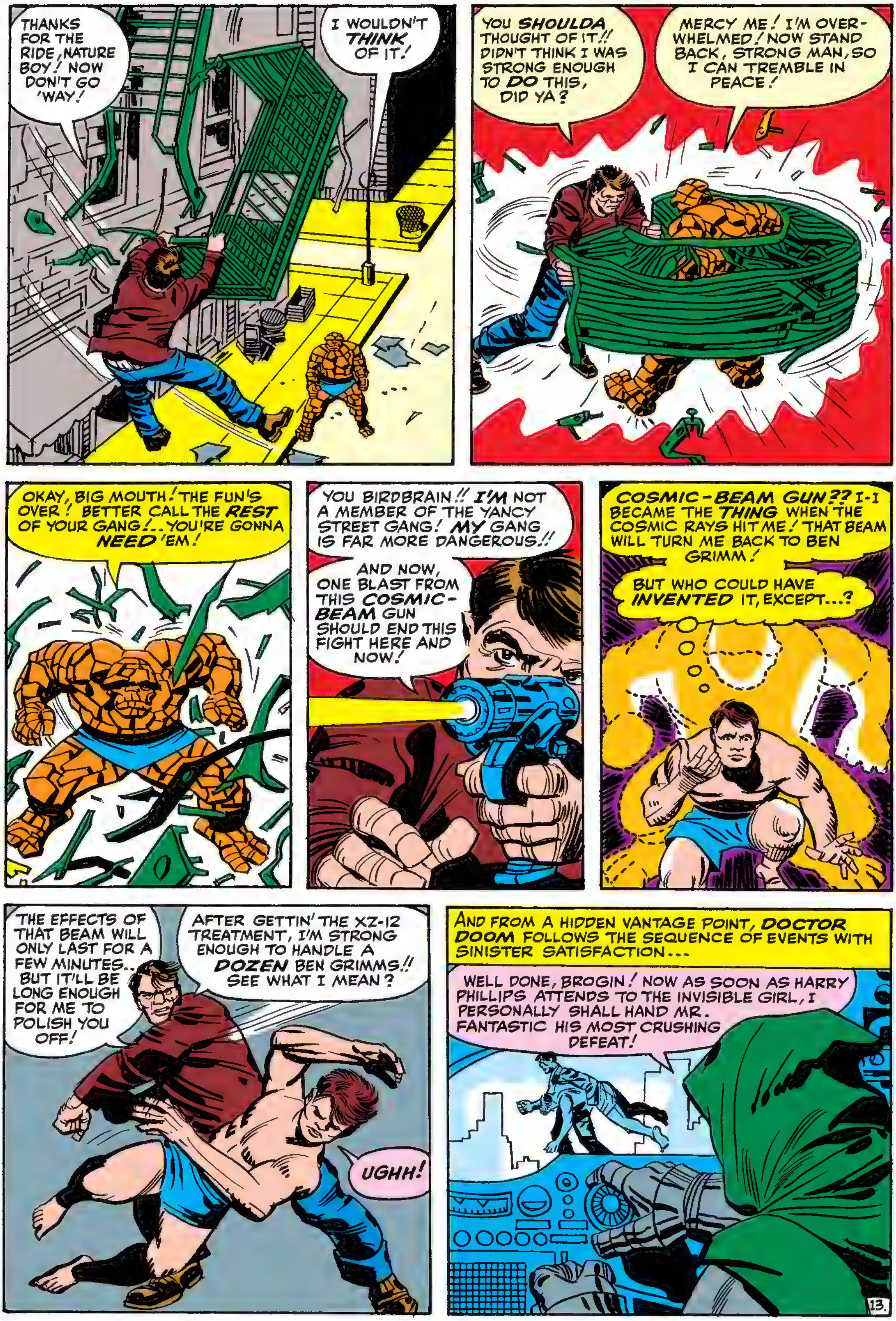

AS FAR AS WE KNOW, DOCTOR DOOM IS STILL AT LARGE, AND HE'LL NEVER REST UNTIL HE'S DESTROYED US! I'VE BEEN TRYING TO TRACE HIM...TO STRIKE FIRST... WHILE YOU'VE THOUGHT ONLY OF YOURSELVES!
NOW TAKE THESE AND CLEAN THIS PLACE UP! AND IF ANYONE WANTS TO QUIT...YOU KNOW WHERE THE DOOR IS!

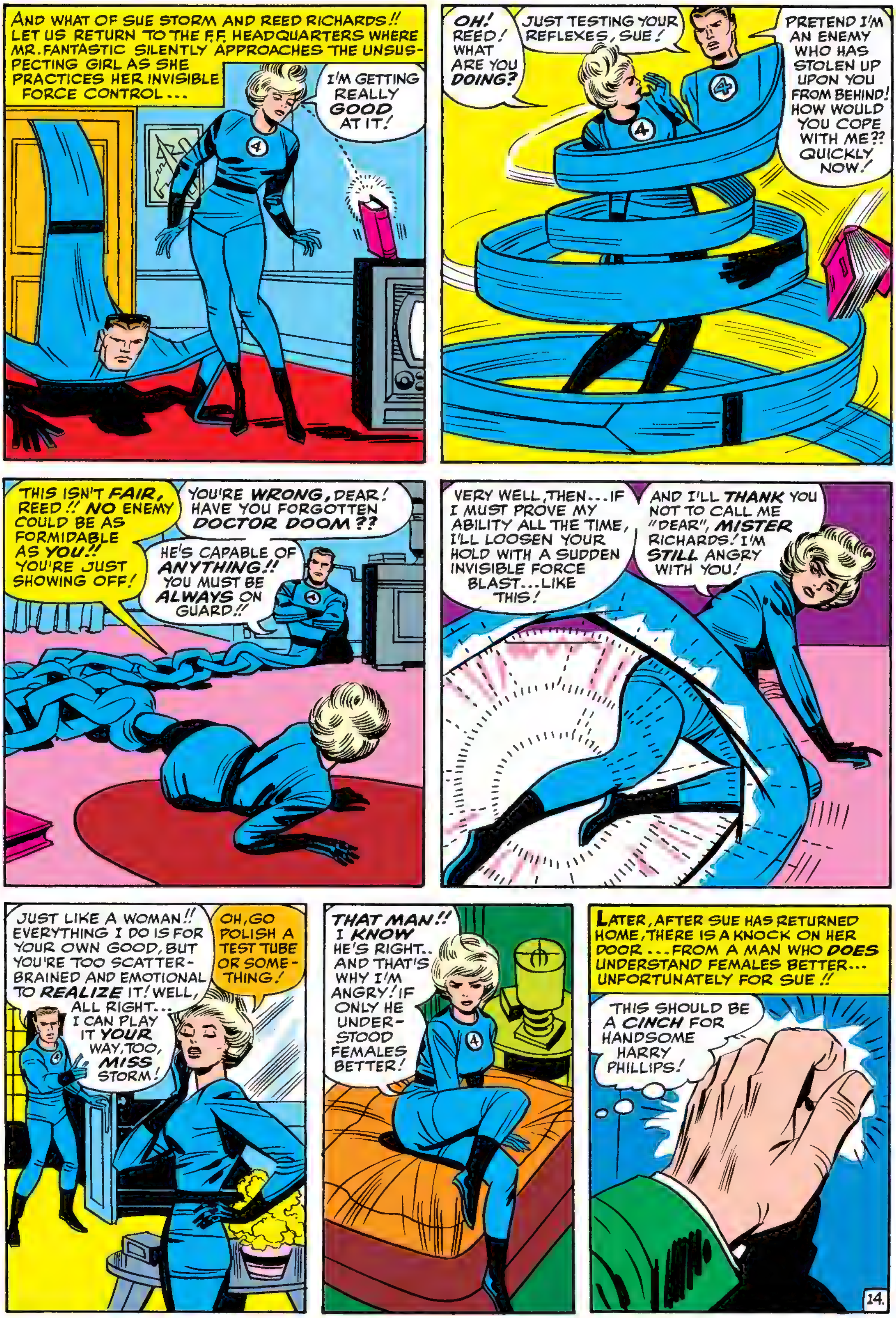

MEANTIME, AT THE HIDDEN LAB OF DOCTOR DOOM ...
DO NOT BE ALARMED! THIS APPARATUS IS A SPECIAL DEVICE I HAVE CREATED WHICH INCREASES YOUR SPECIAL POWERS A DOZENFOLD! AT THIS MOMENT, NONE OF YOU ARE A MATCH FOR ANY OF THE FANTASTIC FOUR, BUT...
...ONCE YOU'VE BEEN SUBJECTED TO THE EFFECTS OF MY XZ-12 DEVICE, THE STORY WILL BE DIFFERENT!!
THERE! IT IS OVER! I'VE ADAPTED EACH XZ-12 DEVICE TO AFFECT YOU DIFFERENTLY!... TO INCREASE JUST ONE SPECIAL POWER IN EACH OF YOU
I'VE INCREASED YOUR HEARING POWER, HANDSOME HARRY, SO THAT YOU CAN HEAR THE INVISIBLE GIRL NO MATTER WHERE SHE MAY HIDE! QUICK! SHOOT AT THE SOUND BEHIND YOU! GOOD! YOU CAN EVEN HEAR A FEATHER FALLING!
AS FOR YOU, BULL BROGIN, YOUR MUSCLE POWER HAS BEEN MULTIPLIED A DOZEN TIMES! WHILE YOUR STRENGTH STILL DOES NOT MATCH THE THING'S YOU SHOULD BE ABLE TO HELP CARRY OUT MY MASTER PLAN!
INSTEAD OF HAVING MERELY A RESISTANCE TO FLAME, YOGI DAKOR, YOU NOW ARE ALMOST COMPLETELY FIREPROOF... AS THE HUMAN TORCH SHALL SOON LEARN TO HIS INTENSE SORROW!
REMEMBER, IF NOT FOR ME, YOU WOULD ALL BE LANGUISHING IN JAIL! SO DO YOUR WORK WELL, AND I PROMISE YOU THE PROTECTION OF DOCTOR DOOM SO LONG AS YOU ARE LOYAL!
NOW WE WILL DISCUSS THE MEANS WHEREBY YOU THREE DEFEAT THE HUMAN TORCH, THE THING, AND THE INVISIBLE GIRL... WHILE I SAVE MR. FANTASTIC FOR MYSELF!!
The VERY NEXT DAY...
READ ALL ABOUT IT! HUMAN TORCH TO RECEIVE MILLION DOLLAR CAR FROM VISITING MAHARAJAH! EXTRA!!
WOW! I'D LIKE TO GET A LOOK AT THAT CAR MYSELF! BUT WHY IS HE GIVING IT TO THE TORCH? AND WHO IS HE, ANYWAY?
DAILY-BULLETIN
HUMAN TORCH TO GET MARVEL CAR!
WEALTHY MAHARAJAH TO GIFT SUPER-HERO WITH FABULOUS MECHANICAL WONDER!

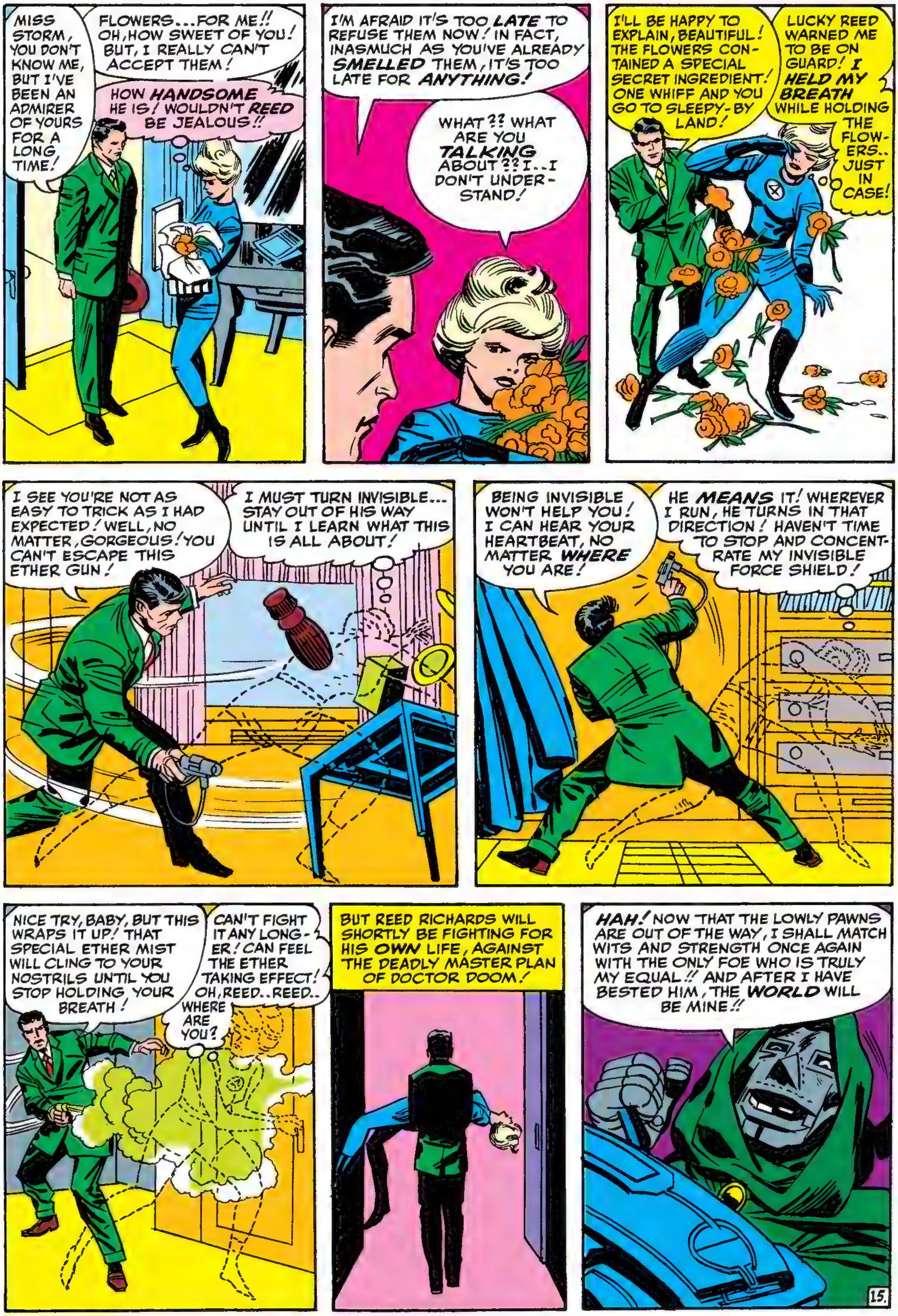

BUT WHEN JOHNNY STORM READS THE NEWS HE REACTS IN A TYPICAL YOUTHFUL FASHION... HE DOESN'T QUESTION THE REASONS... ALL HE WANTS TO DO IS...
WHEEE! I CAN'T WAIT TO GET MY HANDS ON THAT CREAMPUFF!
AILY-BULLETIN FINAL
ONLY CAR OF ITS KIND IN THE WORLD... AND TORCH HAS BUT TO CLAIM IT!
I WON'T TELL BEN! HE MIGHT COME ALONG AND SCARE THE MAHARAJAH AWAY!
ANYWAY, HE'S BUSY WITH HIS OWN PET PEEVE RIGHT NOW!
ANOTHER LETTER FROM THE YANCY STREET GANG! THEY WANNA KNOW WHERE I BUY MY UGLY PILLS! BOY! IF I EVER GET MY HANDS ON 'EM...!
AND IF I TELL SUE, SHE'LL PROBABLY LECTURE ME ABOUT NOT DRIVIN' TOO FAST, AND SAYING "THANK YOU" TO THE MAHARAJAH, AND ALL THAT JAZZ!
ANYWAY, SHE'S ALL WRAPPED UP IN TESTING HER INVISIBILITY CONTROL! SO WHY SHOULD I DISTURB HER?
4
AND OL' REED WOULD SHOOT ME IF I DISTURBED HIM DURING AN EXPERIMENT TO TELL HIM ABOUT A CAR!
AND SO, A SHORT TIME LATER...
THE MAHARAJAH HOPES YOU WILL BE PLEASED WITH HIS GIFT, SAHIB TORCH!
PLEASED? BROTHER! IT'S THE LIVIN' END! IT MAKES THE FANTASTI-CAR LOOK LIKE A DOG SLED!
KEEP THE CROWDS BACK, CHARLIE! THE T.V. BOYS NEED ROOM TO SHOOT THIS FOR TONIGHT'S NEWSCASTS!
I'LL BET THE HUMAN TORCH ONCE SAVED THE MAHARAJAH'S LIFE, BUT THEY KEPT IT SECRET! AND NOW HE'S BEING REWARDED FOR IT!
YES, IT MUST BE SOMETHING LIKE THAT!
WOULD YOU LIKE TO DRIVE THIS VEHICLE TO THE MAHARAJAH'S HOTEL SUITE SO THAT YOU MAY THANK HIM, PERSONALLY?
YOU KNOW IT, PAL!! BUT YOU BETTER GIVE ME A RUN-DOWN ON HOW THIS BABY WORKS!
IT IS SIMPLICITY ITSELF! THESE CONTROL BUTTONS ELECTRONICALLY DETERMINE THE DESIRED SPEED!
WHEEE! SAY, THIS MUSTA BEEN DESIGNED BY A GENIUS! WHO DREAMED IT UP, ANYWAY?
AS YOU SAY, SAHIB, HE IS A GENIUS! HE IS THE MOST BRILLIANT SCIENTIFIC BRAIN IN THE WORLD!
UH-UH! THE SECOND MOST BRILLIANT! MR. FANTASTIC HAS THE TOP SPOT ALL TO HIMSELF!
BAH!! MY MASTER IS FAR SUPERIOR TO YOUR MR. FANTASTIC! ...AS YOU SHALL SOON SEE!

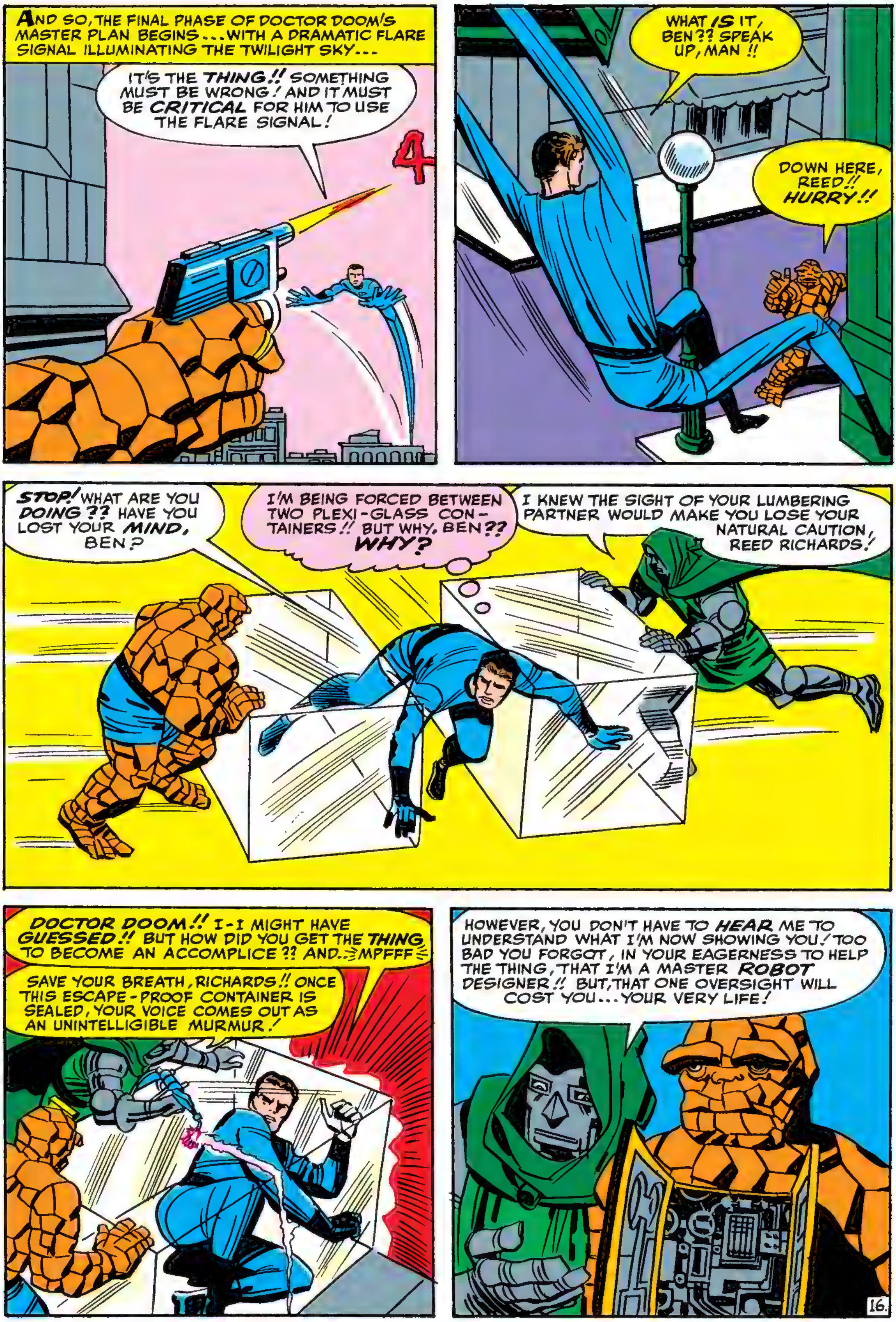

WAIT A MINUTE, FELLA!! WHAT DO YOU *MEAN* AS I SHALL SOON SEE?
MY MEANING, YOU ARROGANT PUPPY, IS THAT OUR LITTLE GAME IS *ENDED!* YOU ARE MY PRISONER!
SURE! SURE! *THAT'LL* BE THE DAY! HEY...HOW'D THIS DOOR GET LOCKED?
YOU MUST BE KIDDIN'!! DO YOU THINK YOU CAN KEEP THE *HUMAN TORCH* A PRISONER BY LOCKING ME IN A *CAR!?*
I CAN *BURN* MY WAY OUT AS EASY AS PIE!! MUCH AS I HATE TO RUIN THIS COOL ROOF, I'LL SHOW YOU WHAT I *MEAN!*
HEY!! WHAT GIVES?? IT... IT DOESN'T *BURN!*
NATURALLY! THE ENTIRE VEHICLE IS LINED WITH A THIN, DOUBLE-STRENGTH COATING OF *ASBESTOS!*
LOOK, GUNGA DIN... I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE *UP* TO, BUT IT WON'T WORK! I'LL MAKE IT SO *HOT* FOR YOU IN HERE THAT YOU'LL KNOCK YOURSELF OUT TO SET ME FREE!
YOU ARE WELCOME TO TRY, MY FIERY YOUNG FRIEND!
I SURE *WILL!!* I'LL JUST KEEP MAKING MY FLAME HOTTER AND HOTTER 'TILL YOU YELL "UNCLE"! WELL, WHAT'RE YOU *WAITIN'* FOR??
SAY, I HOPE I DIDN'T MAKE IT *TOO* HOT! MAYBE HE'S KNOCKED OUT! I BETTER CHECK!
LOWERING THE INTENSITY OF HIS FLAME, THE TORCH THEN SEES...
I DON'T *GET* IT! THE HEAT DIDN'T EVEN *BOTHER* YOU! WHO *ARE* YOU, ANYWAY?!!
A HUMBLE SERVANT OF MY MIGHTY MASTER! AND NOW, YOUNG FOOL, IT IS TIME YOU WENT TO SLEEP!
PRESSING A SMALL BUTTON ON THE CAR'S DASHBOARD, YOGI DAKOR INSTANTLY FILLS THE INTERIOR WITH A POWERFUL NERVE-GAS...
IT WENT EXACTLY AS PLANNED!
BUT I SHOULD HAVE KNOWN IT WOULD! THERE ARE *NONE* MORE BRILLIANT THAN... *DOCTOR DOOM!*

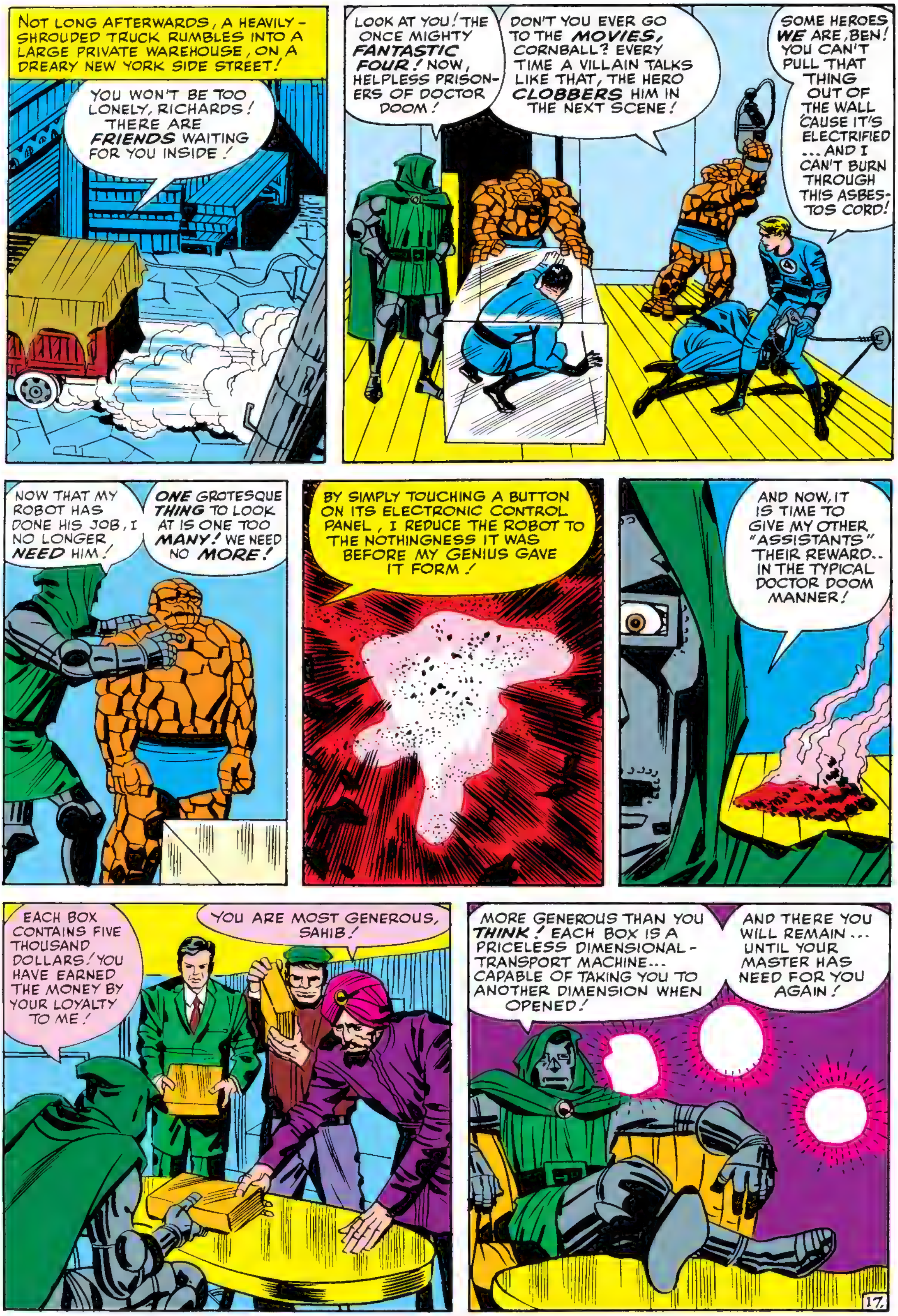

MEANWHILE, WE FIND THE ***THING*** STORMING THROUGH THE STREETS IN A FIT OF RAGE! SO ANGRY IS HE THAT HE HASN'T EVEN BOTHERED TO DON HIS USUAL HAT, COAT AND SUN-GLASSES!
THIS IS THE LAST STRAW!! I'LL TAKE YANCY STREET APART BRICK BY BRICK TILL I FIND THOSE RAT FINKS!
LOOKS LIKE THAT POOR LITTLE KID HAS HIS HAND CAUGHT IN THAT WINDOW GRATING!
HAVE NO FEAR, KIDDO... THE ***THING*** IS HERE!
DON'T BOTHER TO THANK ME! I'M IN A BIG HURRY!
THANK YOU???
I WISH I WAS BIG ENOUGH TO ***WHAP*** YOU ONE!! IF ANYONE ON THIS STREET SEES THAT I LET ***YOU*** HELP ME, MY NAME'S ***MUD*** AROUND HERE!
JUST MY LUCK!! YOU'RE TOO BIG TO SPANK AND TOO SMALL TO ***CLOBBER!!***
ALL RIGHT, YOU LOW-DOWN, LETTER-WRITING, LILY-LIVERED COWARDS...THIS IS YOUR PEN-PAL, THE ***THING*** TALKIN'! I'M GIVIN' THE YANCY STREET GANG TEN SECONDS TO SHOW THEIR UGLY FACES BEFORE I ***REALLY*** GET MAD!!!
YANCY ST.
I KNEW THAT LETTER WOULD BRING YOU HERE! I'VE BEEN WAITIN' TO ***WEL-COME*** YA!
YIPPEE! THIS IS MY ***LUCKY*** DAY! YOU'RE BIG ENOUGH NOT TO FALL APART WHEN I LAND A HAYMAKER ON YOU!
JUST ***STAY*** THERE FOR A MINUTE... I WANNA REMEMBER YOU AS YOU ARE!
I ALWAYS ***FIGURED*** YOU CREEPS LIVED UNDER THE GUTTER SOMEWHERE!! HERE, I'LL TOSS YOU UP SO YOU CAN SEE WHAT FRESH AIR IS LIKE BEFORE I ***DEMOLISH*** YA!!
ENJOY IT WHILE YOU ***CAN,*** FROG-FACE! YOU'LL SOON GET YOURS!

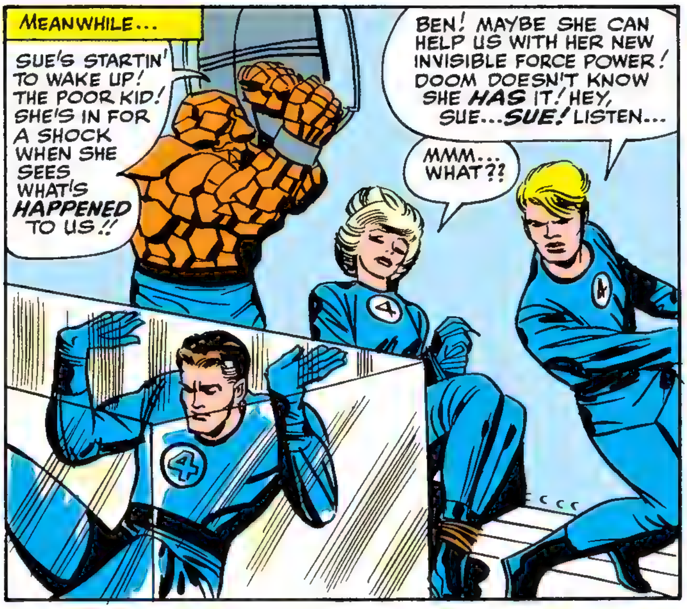

THANKS FOR THE RIDE, NATURE BOY! NOW DON'T GO 'WAY!
I WOULDN'T *THINK* OF IT!
YOU *SHOULDA* THOUGHT OF IT!! DIDN'T THINK I WAS STRONG ENOUGH TO *DO* THIS, DID YA?
MERCY ME! I'M OVER-WHELMED! NOW STAND BACK, STRONG MAN, SO I CAN TREMBLE IN PEACE!
OKAY, BIG MOUTH! THE FUN'S OVER! BETTER CALL THE *REST* OF YOUR GANG!.. YOU'RE GONNA *NEED* 'EM!
YOU BIRDBRAIN!! *I'M* NOT A MEMBER OF THE YANCY STREET GANG! *MY* GANG IS FAR MORE DANGEROUS!!
AND NOW, ONE BLAST FROM THIS *COSMIC-BEAM* GUN SHOULD END THIS FIGHT HERE AND NOW!
COSMIC-BEAM GUN?? I-I BECAME THE *THING* WHEN THE COSMIC RAYS HIT ME! THAT BEAM WILL TURN ME BACK TO BEN GRIMM!
BUT WHO COULD HAVE *INVENTED* IT, EXCEPT...?
THE EFFECTS OF THAT BEAM WILL ONLY LAST FOR A FEW MINUTES.. BUT IT'LL BE LONG ENOUGH FOR ME TO POLISH YOU OFF!
AFTER GETTIN' THE XZ-12 TREATMENT, I'M STRONG ENOUGH TO HANDLE A *DOZEN* BEN GRIMMS!! SEE WHAT I MEAN?
UGHH!
AND FROM A HIDDEN VANTAGE POINT, *DOCTOR DOOM* FOLLOWS THE SEQUENCE OF EVENTS WITH SINISTER SATISFACTION...
WELL DONE, BROGIN! NOW AS SOON AS HARRY PHILLIPS ATTENDS TO THE INVISIBLE GIRL, I PERSONALLY SHALL HAND MR. FANTASTIC HIS MOST CRUSHING DEFEAT!

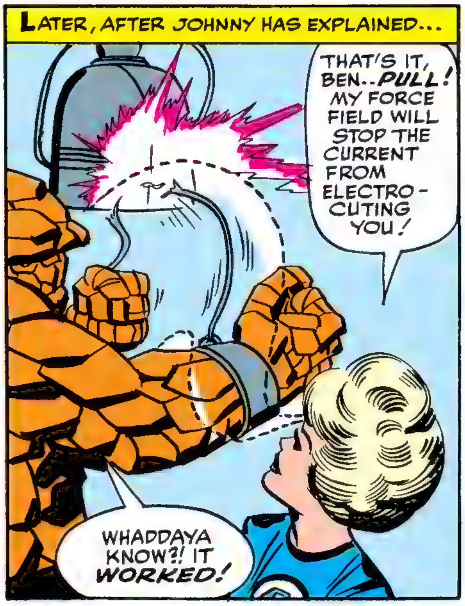

AND WHAT OF SUE STORM AND REED RICHARDS!! LET US RETURN TO THE F.F. HEADQUARTERS WHERE MR. FANTASTIC SILENTLY APPROACHES THE UNSUSPECTING GIRL AS SHE PRACTICES HER INVISIBLE FORCE CONTROL...
I'M GETTING REALLY *GOOD* AT IT!
OH! REED! WHAT ARE YOU *DOING?*
JUST TESTING YOUR REFLEXES, SUE!
PRETEND I'M AN ENEMY WHO HAS STOLEN UP UPON YOU FROM BEHIND! HOW WOULD YOU COPE WITH ME?? QUICKLY NOW!
THIS ISN'T *FAIR,* REED!! *NO* ENEMY COULD BE AS FORMIDABLE AS *YOU!!* YOU'RE JUST SHOWING OFF!
YOU'RE *WRONG,* DEAR! HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN *DOCTOR DOOM??*
HE'S CAPABLE OF *ANYTHING!!* YOU MUST BE *ALWAYS* ON GUARD!!
VERY WELL, THEN... IF I MUST PROVE MY ABILITY ALL THE TIME, I'LL LOOSEN YOUR HOLD WITH A SUDDEN INVISIBLE FORCE BLAST... LIKE THIS!
AND I'LL *THANK* YOU NOT TO CALL ME "DEAR", *MISTER* RICHARDS! I'M *STILL* ANGRY WITH YOU!
JUST LIKE A WOMAN!! EVERYTHING I DO IS FOR YOUR OWN GOOD, BUT YOU'RE TOO SCATTER-BRAINED AND EMOTIONAL TO *REALIZE* IT! WELL, ALL RIGHT... I CAN PLAY IT *YOUR* WAY, TOO, *MISS* STORM!
OH, GO POLISH A TEST TUBE OR SOMETHING!
THAT MAN!! I *KNOW* HE'S RIGHT.. AND THAT'S WHY I'M ANGRY! IF ONLY HE UNDERSTOOD FEMALES BETTER!
LATER, AFTER SUE HAS RETURNED HOME, THERE IS A KNOCK ON HER DOOR... FROM A MAN WHO *DOES* UNDERSTAND FEMALES BETTER... UNFORTUNATELY FOR SUE!!
THIS SHOULD BE A *CINCH* FOR HANDSOME HARRY PHILLIPS!

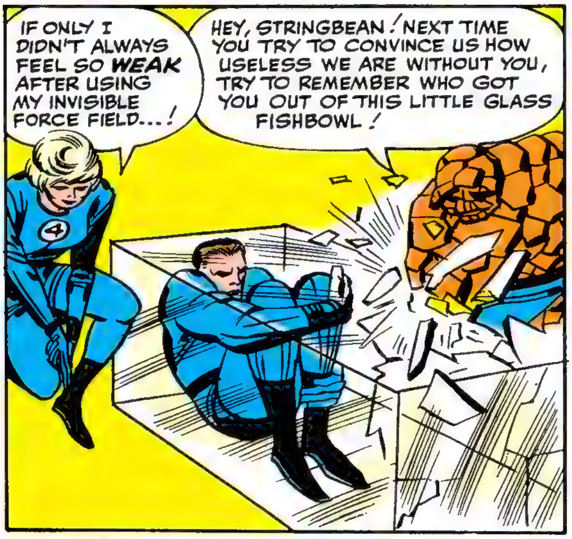

MISS STORM, YOU DON'T KNOW ME, BUT I'VE BEEN AN ADMIRER OF YOURS FOR A LONG TIME!
FLOWERS...FOR ME!! OH, HOW SWEET OF YOU! BUT, I REALLY CAN'T ACCEPT THEM!
HOW HANDSOME HE IS! WOULDN'T REED BE JEALOUS!!
I'M AFRAID IT'S TOO LATE TO REFUSE THEM NOW! IN FACT, INASMUCH AS YOU'VE ALREADY SMELLED THEM, IT'S TOO LATE FOR ANYTHING!
WHAT?? WHAT ARE YOU TALKING ABOUT?? I..I DON'T UNDERSTAND!
I'LL BE HAPPY TO EXPLAIN, BEAUTIFUL! THE FLOWERS CONTAINED A SPECIAL SECRET INGREDIENT! ONE WHIFF AND YOU GO TO SLEEPY-BY LAND!
LUCKY REED WARNED ME TO BE ON GUARD! I HELD MY BREATH WHILE HOLDING THE FLOWERS.. JUST IN CASE!
I SEE YOU'RE NOT AS EASY TO TRICK AS I HAD EXPECTED! WELL, NO MATTER, GORGEOUS! YOU CAN'T ESCAPE THIS ETHER GUN!
I MUST TURN INVISIBLE... STAY OUT OF HIS WAY UNTIL I LEARN WHAT THIS IS ALL ABOUT!
BEING INVISIBLE WON'T HELP YOU! I CAN HEAR YOUR HEARTBEAT, NO MATTER WHERE YOU ARE!
HE MEANS IT! WHEREVER I RUN, HE TURNS IN THAT DIRECTION! HAVEN'T TIME TO STOP AND CONCENTRATE MY INVISIBLE FORCE SHIELD!
NICE TRY, BABY, BUT THIS WRAPS IT UP! THAT SPECIAL ETHER MIST WILL CLING TO YOUR NOSTRILS UNTIL YOU STOP HOLDING YOUR BREATH!
CAN'T FIGHT IT ANY LONGER! CAN FEEL THE ETHER TAKING EFFECT! OH, REED..REED.. WHERE ARE YOU?
BUT REED RICHARDS WILL SHORTLY BE FIGHTING FOR HIS OWN LIFE, AGAINST THE DEADLY MASTER PLAN OF DOCTOR DOOM!
HAH! NOW THAT THE LOWLY PAWNS ARE OUT OF THE WAY, I SHALL MATCH WITS AND STRENGTH ONCE AGAIN WITH THE ONLY FOE WHO IS TRULY MY EQUAL!! AND AFTER I HAVE BESTED HIM, THE WORLD WILL BE MINE!!

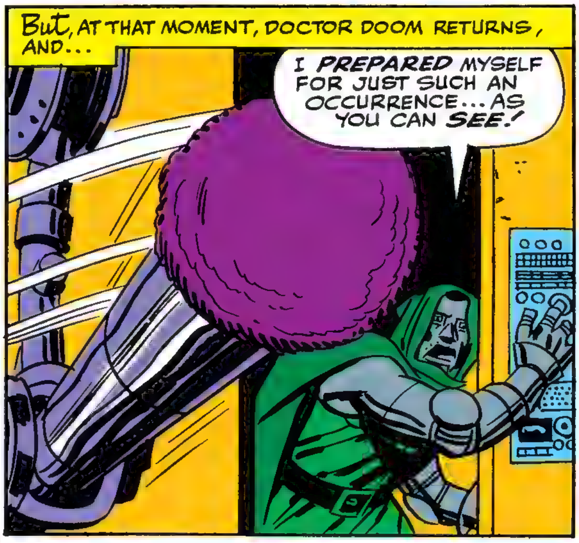

AND SO, THE FINAL PHASE OF DOCTOR DOOM'S MASTER PLAN BEGINS... WITH A DRAMATIC FLARE SIGNAL ILLUMINATING THE TWILIGHT SKY...
IT'S THE THING!! SOMETHING MUST BE WRONG! AND IT MUST BE CRITICAL FOR HIM TO USE THE FLARE SIGNAL!
4
WHAT IS IT, BEN?? SPEAK UP, MAN!!
DOWN HERE, REED!! HURRY!!
STOP! WHAT ARE YOU DOING?? HAVE YOU LOST YOUR MIND, BEN?
I'M BEING FORCED BETWEEN TWO PLEXI-GLASS CONTAINERS!! BUT WHY, BEN?? WHY?
I KNEW THE SIGHT OF YOUR LUMBERING PARTNER WOULD MAKE YOU LOSE YOUR NATURAL CAUTION, REED RICHARDS!
DOCTOR DOOM!! I-I MIGHT HAVE GUESSED!! BUT HOW DID YOU GET THE THING TO BECOME AN ACCOMPLICE?? AND... MPFFF
SAVE YOUR BREATH, RICHARDS!! ONCE THIS ESCAPE-PROOF CONTAINER IS SEALED, YOUR VOICE COMES OUT AS AN UNINTELLIGIBLE MURMUR!
HOWEVER, YOU DON'T HAVE TO HEAR ME TO UNDERSTAND WHAT I'M NOW SHOWING YOU! TOO BAD YOU FORGOT, IN YOUR EAGERNESS TO HELP THE THING, THAT I'M A MASTER ROBOT DESIGNER!! BUT, THAT ONE OVERSIGHT WILL COST YOU... YOUR VERY LIFE!

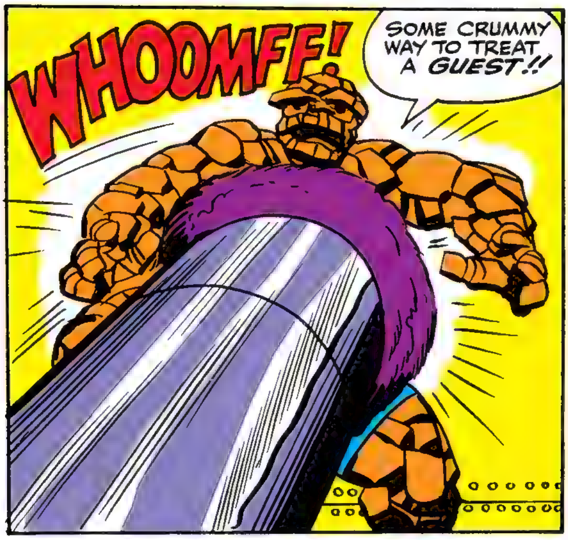

NOT LONG AFTERWARDS, A HEAVILY-SHROUDED TRUCK RUMBLES INTO A LARGE PRIVATE WAREHOUSE, ON A DREARY NEW YORK SIDE STREET!
YOU WON'T BE TOO LONELY, RICHARDS! THERE ARE *FRIENDS* WAITING FOR YOU INSIDE!
LOOK AT YOU! THE ONCE MIGHTY *FANTASTIC FOUR!* NOW, HELPLESS PRISONERS OF DOCTOR DOOM!
DON'T YOU EVER GO TO THE *MOVIES,* CORNBALL? EVERY TIME A VILLAIN TALKS LIKE THAT, THE HERO *CLOBBERS* HIM IN THE NEXT SCENE!
SOME HEROES *WE* ARE, BEN! YOU CAN'T PULL THAT THING OUT OF THE WALL 'CAUSE IT'S ELECTRIFIED ... AND I CAN'T BURN THROUGH THIS ASBESTOS CORD!
NOW THAT MY ROBOT HAS DONE HIS JOB, I NO LONGER *NEED* HIM!
ONE GROTESQUE *THING* TO LOOK AT IS ONE TOO *MANY!* WE NEED NO *MORE!*
BY SIMPLY TOUCHING A BUTTON ON ITS ELECTRONIC CONTROL PANEL, I REDUCE THE ROBOT TO THE NOTHINGNESS IT WAS BEFORE MY GENIUS GAVE IT FORM!
AND NOW, IT IS TIME TO GIVE MY OTHER "ASSISTANTS" THEIR REWARD.. IN THE TYPICAL DOCTOR DOOM MANNER!
EACH BOX CONTAINS FIVE THOUSAND DOLLARS! YOU HAVE EARNED THE MONEY BY YOUR LOYALTY TO ME!
YOU ARE MOST GENEROUS, SAHIB!
MORE GENEROUS THAN YOU *THINK!* EACH BOX IS A PRICELESS DIMENSIONAL-TRANSPORT MACHINE... CAPABLE OF TAKING YOU TO ANOTHER DIMENSION WHEN OPENED!
AND THERE YOU WILL REMAIN ... UNTIL YOUR MASTER HAS NEED FOR YOU AGAIN!

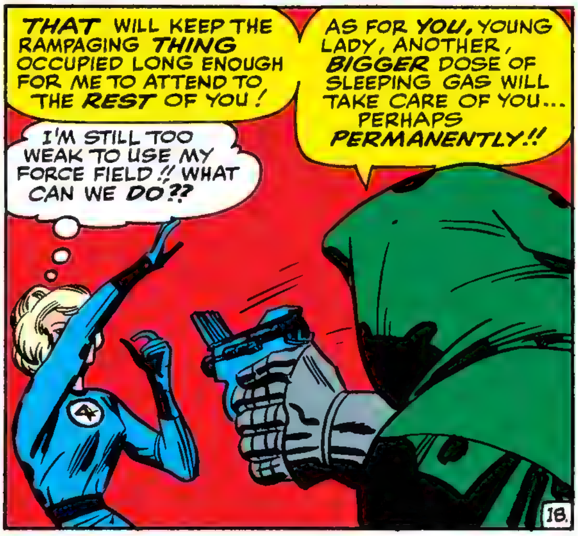

MEANWHILE...
SUE'S STARTIN' TO WAKE UP! THE POOR KID! SHE'S IN FOR A SHOCK WHEN SHE SEES WHAT'S HAPPENED TO US!!
BEN! MAYBE SHE CAN HELP US WITH HER NEW INVISIBLE FORCE POWER! DOOM DOESN'T KNOW SHE HAS IT! HEY, SUE...SUE! LISTEN...
MMM... WHAT??

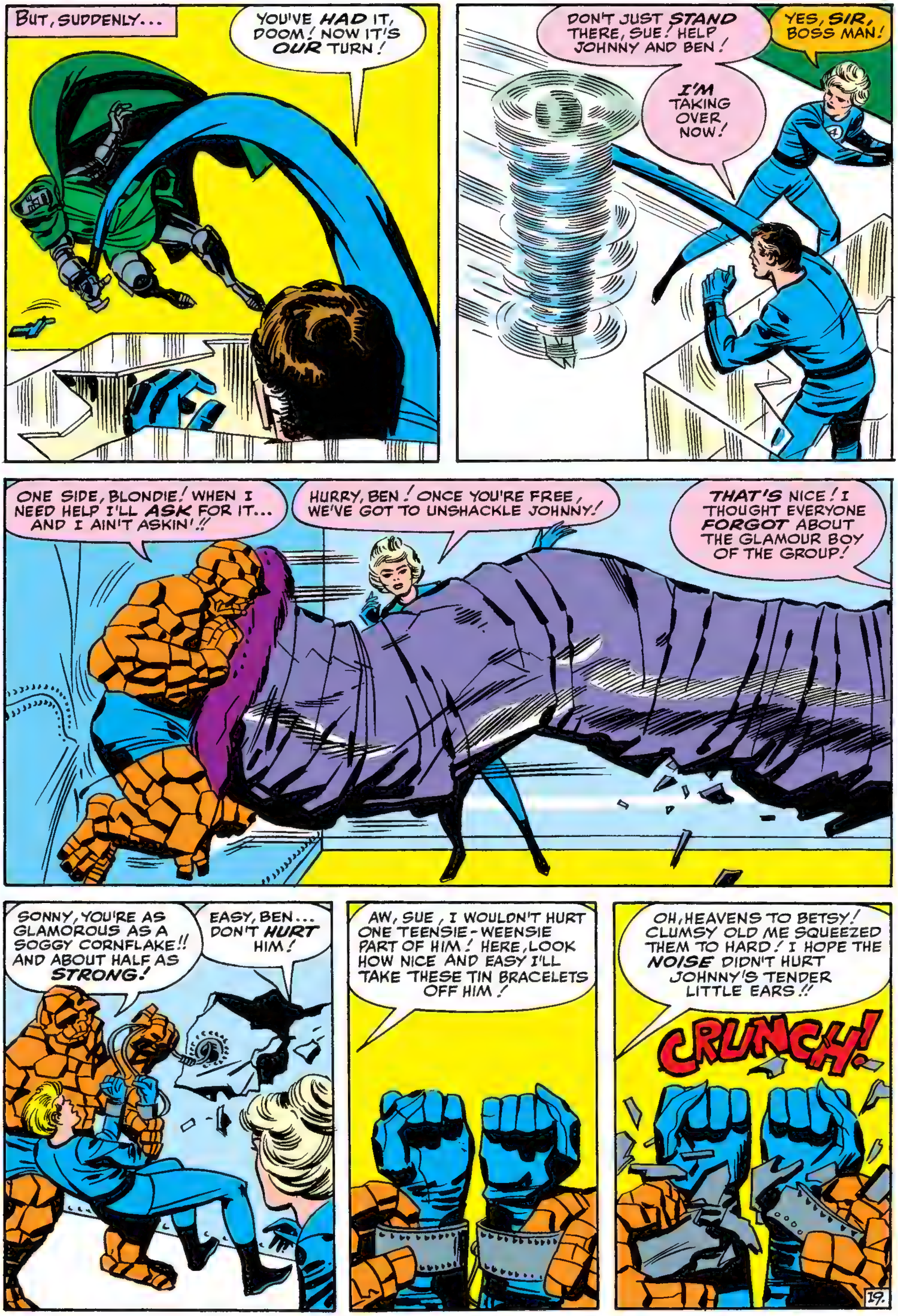

LATER, AFTER JOHNNY HAS EXPLAINED...
THAT'S IT, BEN..PULL! MY FORCE FIELD WILL STOP THE CURRENT FROM ELECTROCUTING YOU!
WHADDAYA KNOW?! IT WORKED!

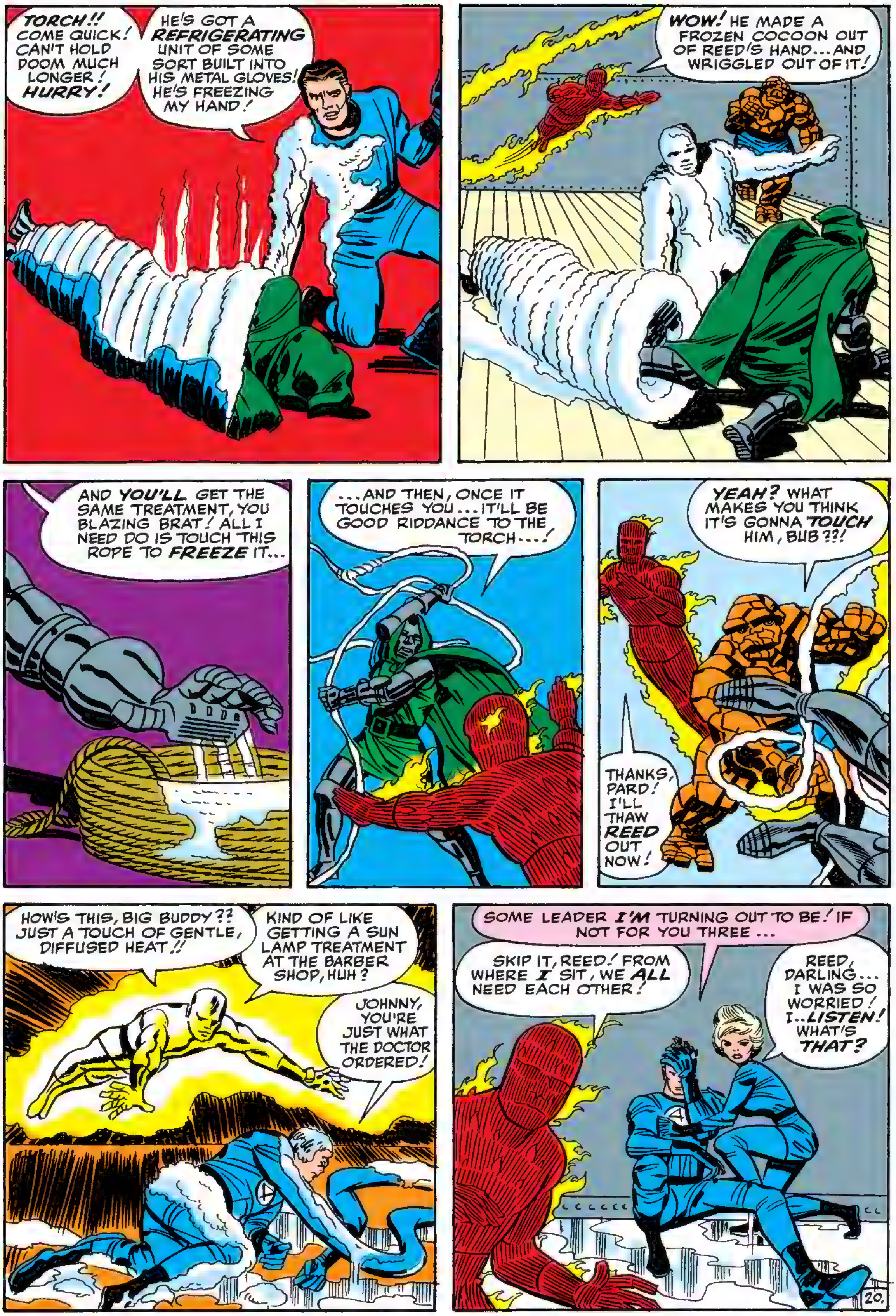

IF ONLY I DIDN'T ALWAYS FEEL SO WEAK AFTER USING MY INVISIBLE FORCE FIELD...!
HEY, STRINGBEAN! NEXT TIME YOU TRY TO CONVINCE US HOW USELESS WE ARE WITHOUT YOU, TRY TO REMEMBER WHO GOT YOU OUT OF THIS LITTLE GLASS FISHBOWL!

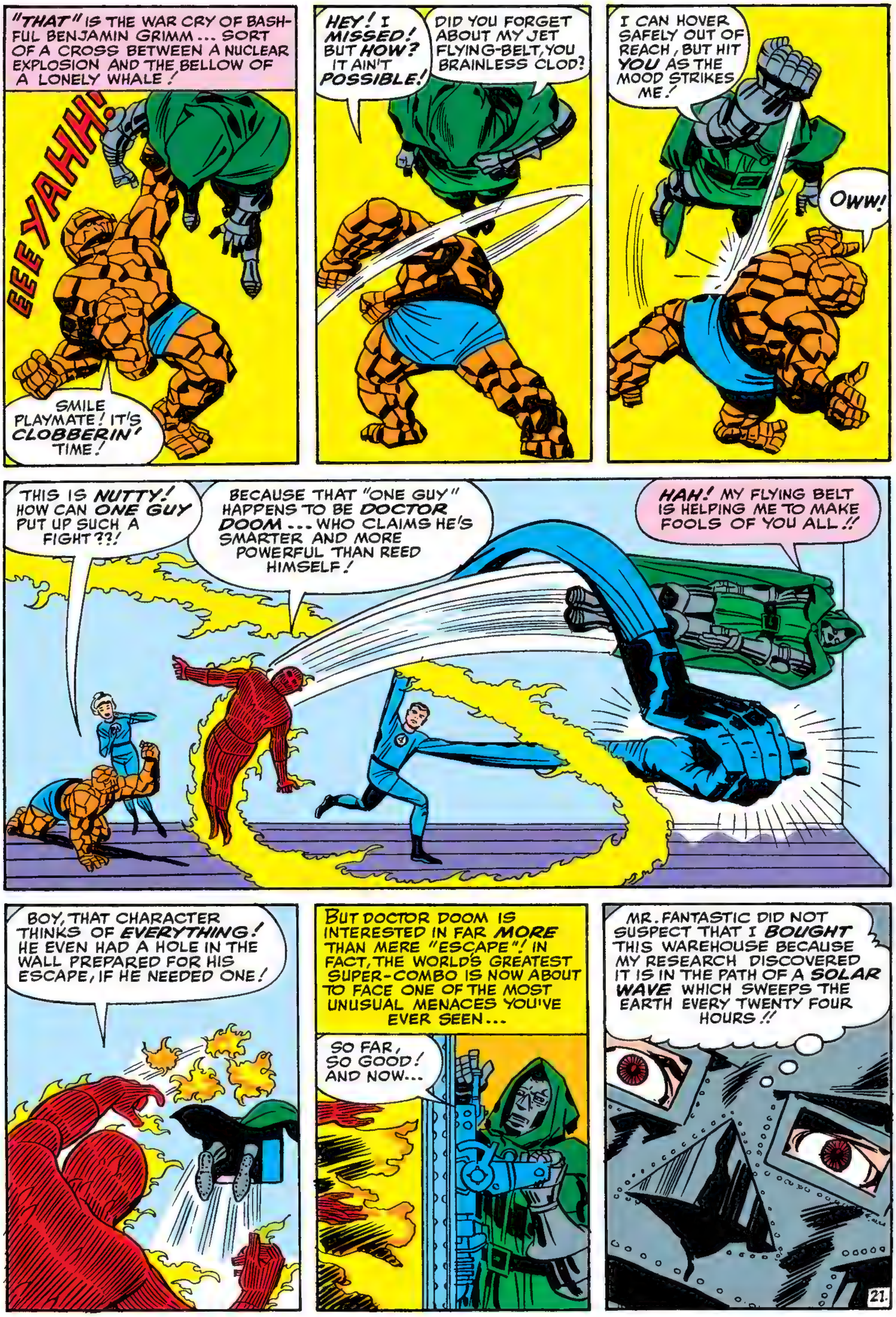

BUT, AT THAT MOMENT, DOCTOR DOOM RETURNS, AND...
I PREPARED MYSELF FOR JUST SUCH AN OCCURRENCE...AS YOU CAN SEE!

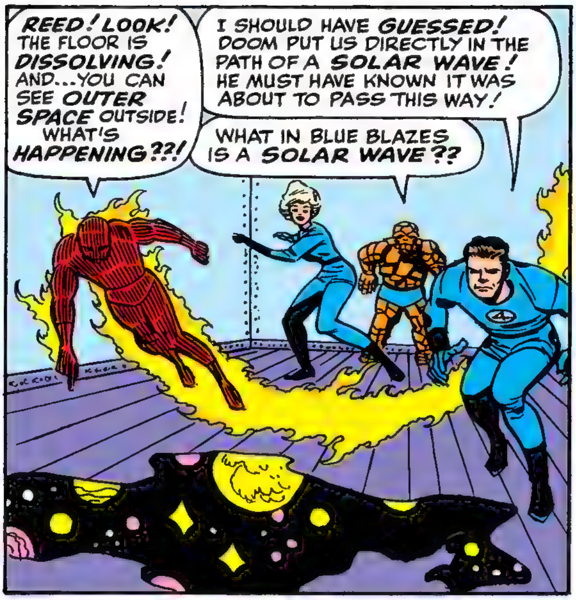

WHOOMFF!
SOME CRUMMY WAY TO TREAT A GUEST!!

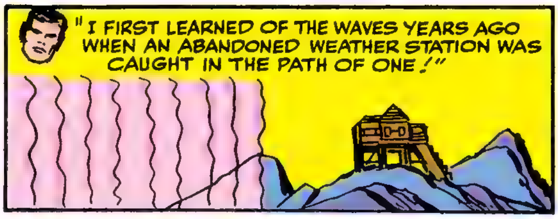

THAT WILL KEEP THE RAMPAGING THING OCCUPIED LONG ENOUGH FOR ME TO ATTEND TO THE REST OF YOU!
AS FOR YOU, YOUNG LADY, ANOTHER, BIGGER DOSE OF SLEEPING GAS WILL TAKE CARE OF YOU... PERHAPS PERMANENTLY!!
I'M STILL TOO WEAK TO USE MY FORCE FIELD!! WHAT CAN WE DO??

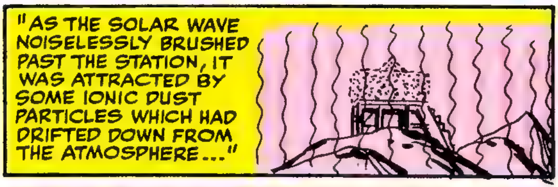

BUT, SUDDENLY...
YOU'VE HAD IT, DOOM! NOW IT'S OUR TURN!
DON'T JUST STAND THERE, SUE! HELP JOHNNY AND BEN!
YES, SIR, BOSS MAN!
I'M TAKING OVER NOW!
ONE SIDE, BLONDIE! WHEN I NEED HELP I'LL ASK FOR IT... AND I AIN'T ASKIN'!!
HURRY, BEN! ONCE YOU'RE FREE, WE'VE GOT TO UNSHACKLE JOHNNY!
THAT'S NICE! I THOUGHT EVERYONE FORGOT ABOUT THE GLAMOUR BOY OF THE GROUP!
SONNY, YOU'RE AS GLAMOROUS AS A SOGGY CORNFLAKE!! AND ABOUT HALF AS STRONG!
EASY, BEN... DON'T HURT HIM!
AW, SUE, I WOULDN'T HURT ONE TEENSIE-WEENSIE PART OF HIM! HERE, LOOK HOW NICE AND EASY I'LL TAKE THESE TIN BRACELETS OFF HIM!
OH, HEAVENS TO BETSY! CLUMSY OLD ME SQUEEZED THEM TO HARD! I HOPE THE NOISE DIDN'T HURT JOHNNY'S TENDER LITTLE EARS!!
CRUNCH!

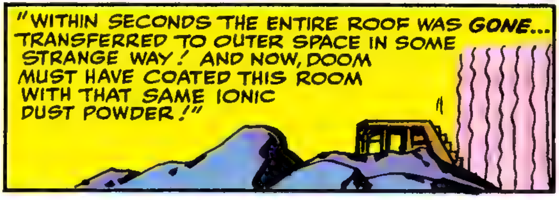

TORCH!! COME QUICK! CAN'T HOLD DOOM MUCH LONGER! HURRY!
HE'S GOT A REFRIGERATING UNIT OF SOME SORT BUILT INTO HIS METAL GLOVES! HE'S FREEZING MY HAND!
WOW! HE MADE A FROZEN COCOON OUT OF REED'S HAND... AND WRIGGLED OUT OF IT!
AND YOU'LL GET THE SAME TREATMENT, YOU BLAZING BRAT! ALL I NEED DO IS TOUCH THIS ROPE TO FREEZE IT...
...AND THEN, ONCE IT TOUCHES YOU... IT'LL BE GOOD RIDDANCE TO THE TORCH...!
YEAH? WHAT MAKES YOU THINK IT'S GONNA TOUCH HIM, BUB??!
THANKS, PARD! I'LL THAW REED OUT NOW!
HOW'S THIS, BIG BUDDY?? JUST A TOUCH OF GENTLE, DIFFUSED HEAT!!
KIND OF LIKE GETTING A SUN LAMP TREATMENT AT THE BARBER SHOP, HUH?
JOHNNY, YOU'RE JUST WHAT THE DOCTOR ORDERED!
SOME LEADER I'M TURNING OUT TO BE! IF NOT FOR YOU THREE ...
SKIP IT, REED! FROM WHERE I SIT, WE ALL NEED EACH OTHER!
REED, DARLING... I WAS SO WORRIED! I.. LISTEN! WHAT'S THAT?

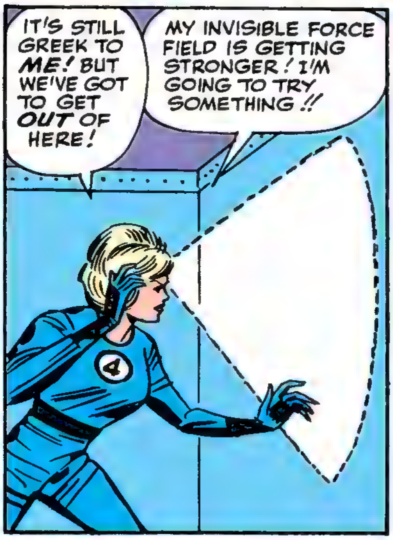

"THAT" IS THE WAR CRY OF BASHFUL BENJAMIN GRIMM ... SORT OF A CROSS BETWEEN A NUCLEAR EXPLOSION AND THE BELLOW OF A LONELY WHALE!
EEEYAHH!
SMILE PLAYMATE! IT'S CLOBBERIN' TIME!
HEY! I MISSED! BUT HOW? IT AIN'T POSSIBLE!
DID YOU FORGET ABOUT MY JET FLYING-BELT, YOU BRAINLESS CLOD?
I CAN HOVER SAFELY OUT OF REACH, BUT HIT YOU AS THE MOOD STRIKES ME!
OWW!
THIS IS NUTTY! HOW CAN ONE GUY PUT UP SUCH A FIGHT??!
BECAUSE THAT "ONE GUY" HAPPENS TO BE DOCTOR DOOM ... WHO CLAIMS HE'S SMARTER AND MORE POWERFUL THAN REED HIMSELF!
HAH! MY FLYING BELT IS HELPING ME TO MAKE FOOLS OF YOU ALL!!
BOY, THAT CHARACTER THINKS OF EVERYTHING! HE EVEN HAD A HOLE IN THE WALL PREPARED FOR HIS ESCAPE, IF HE NEEDED ONE!
BUT DOCTOR DOOM IS INTERESTED IN FAR MORE THAN MERE "ESCAPE"! IN FACT, THE WORLD'S GREATEST SUPER-COMBO IS NOW ABOUT TO FACE ONE OF THE MOST UNUSUAL MENACES YOU'VE EVER SEEN...
SO FAR, SO GOOD! AND NOW...
MR. FANTASTIC DID NOT SUSPECT THAT I BOUGHT THIS WAREHOUSE BECAUSE MY RESEARCH DISCOVERED IT IS IN THE PATH OF A SOLAR WAVE WHICH SWEEPS THE EARTH EVERY TWENTY FOUR HOURS!!

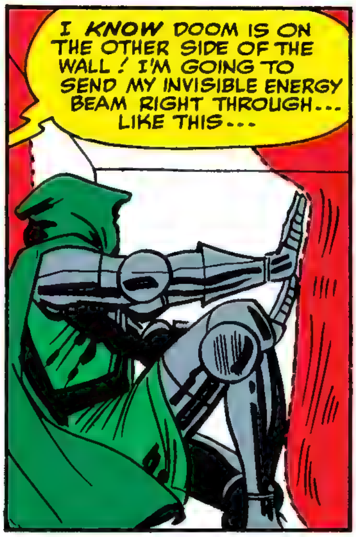

REED! LOOK! THE FLOOR IS DISSOLVING! AND...YOU CAN SEE OUTER SPACE OUTSIDE! WHAT'S HAPPENING??!
I SHOULD HAVE GUESSED! DOOM PUT US DIRECTLY IN THE PATH OF A SOLAR WAVE! HE MUST HAVE KNOWN IT WAS ABOUT TO PASS THIS WAY!
WHAT IN BLUE BLAZES IS A SOLAR WAVE??

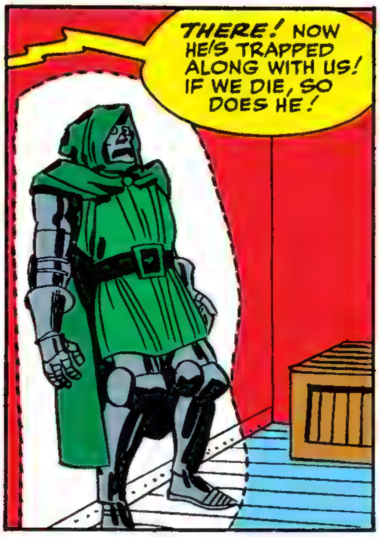

"I FIRST LEARNED OF THE WAVES YEARS AGO WHEN AN ABANDONED WEATHER STATION WAS CAUGHT IN THE PATH OF ONE!"

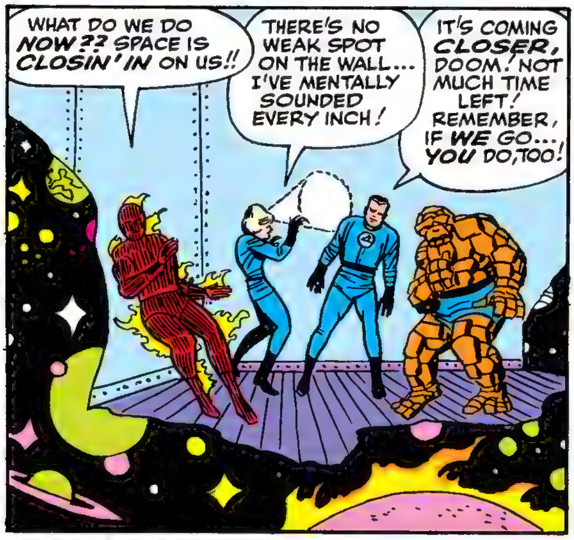

"AS THE SOLAR WAVE NOISELESSLY BRUSHED PAST THE STATION, IT WAS ATTRACTED BY SOME IONIC DUST PARTICLES WHICH HAD DRIFTED DOWN FROM THE ATMOSPHERE..."

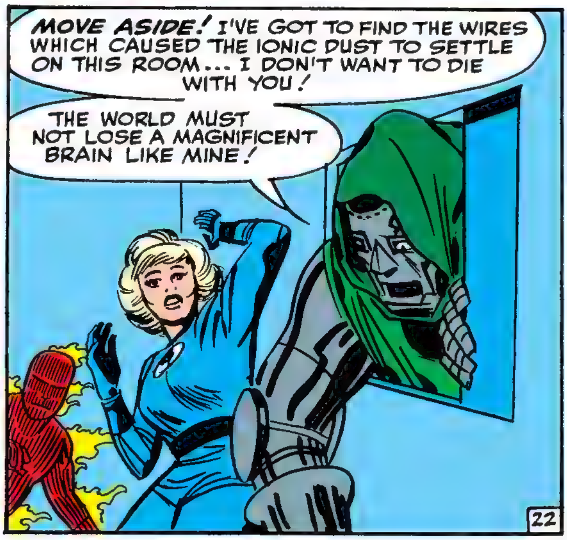

"WITHIN SECONDS THE ENTIRE ROOF WAS GONE... TRANSFERRED TO OUTER SPACE IN SOME STRANGE WAY! AND NOW, DOOM MUST HAVE COATED THIS ROOM WITH THAT SAME IONIC DUST POWDER!"

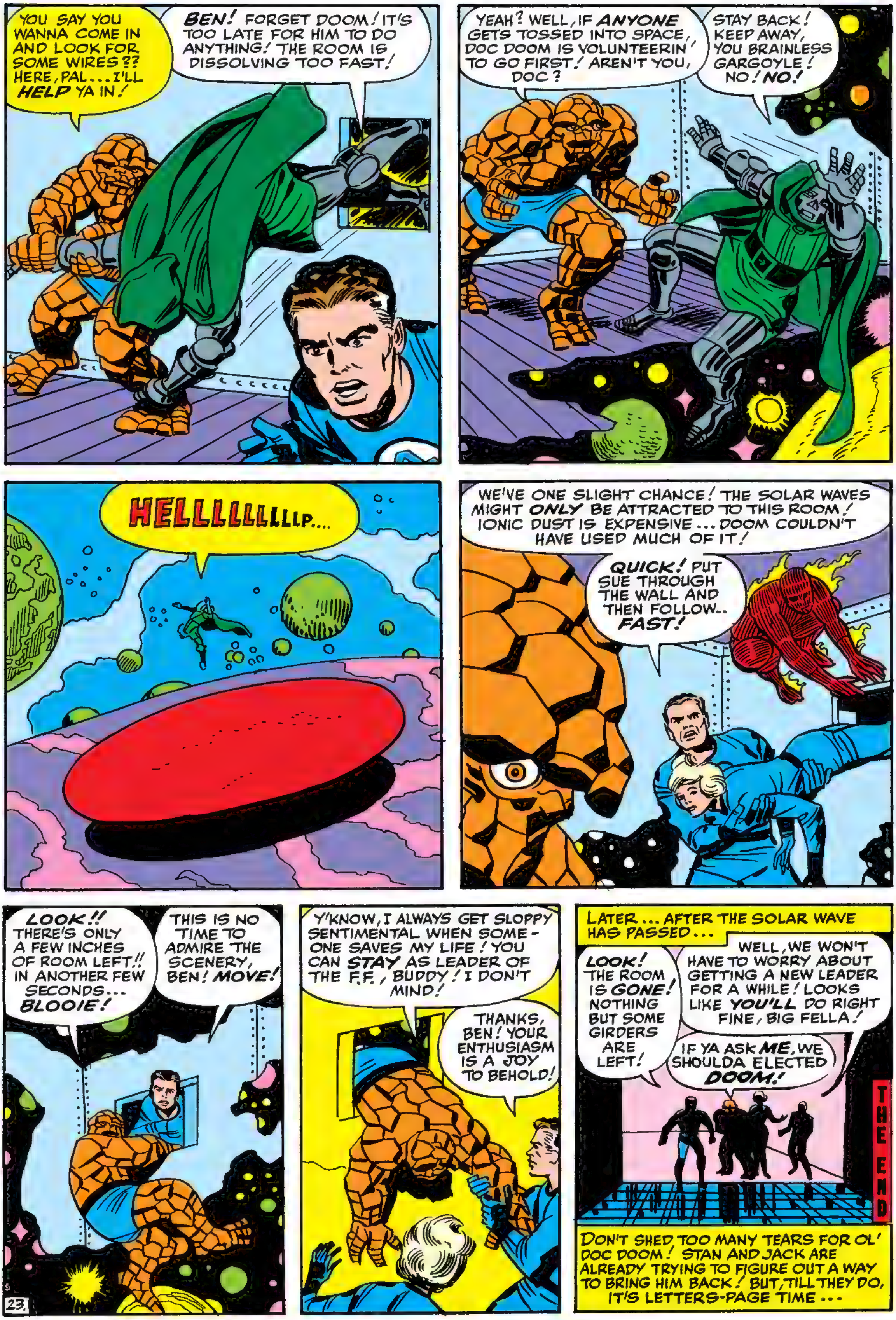

IT'S STILL GREEK TO ME! BUT WE'VE GOT TO GET OUT OF HERE!
MY INVISIBLE FORCE FIELD IS GETTING STRONGER! I'M GOING TO TRY SOMETHING!!

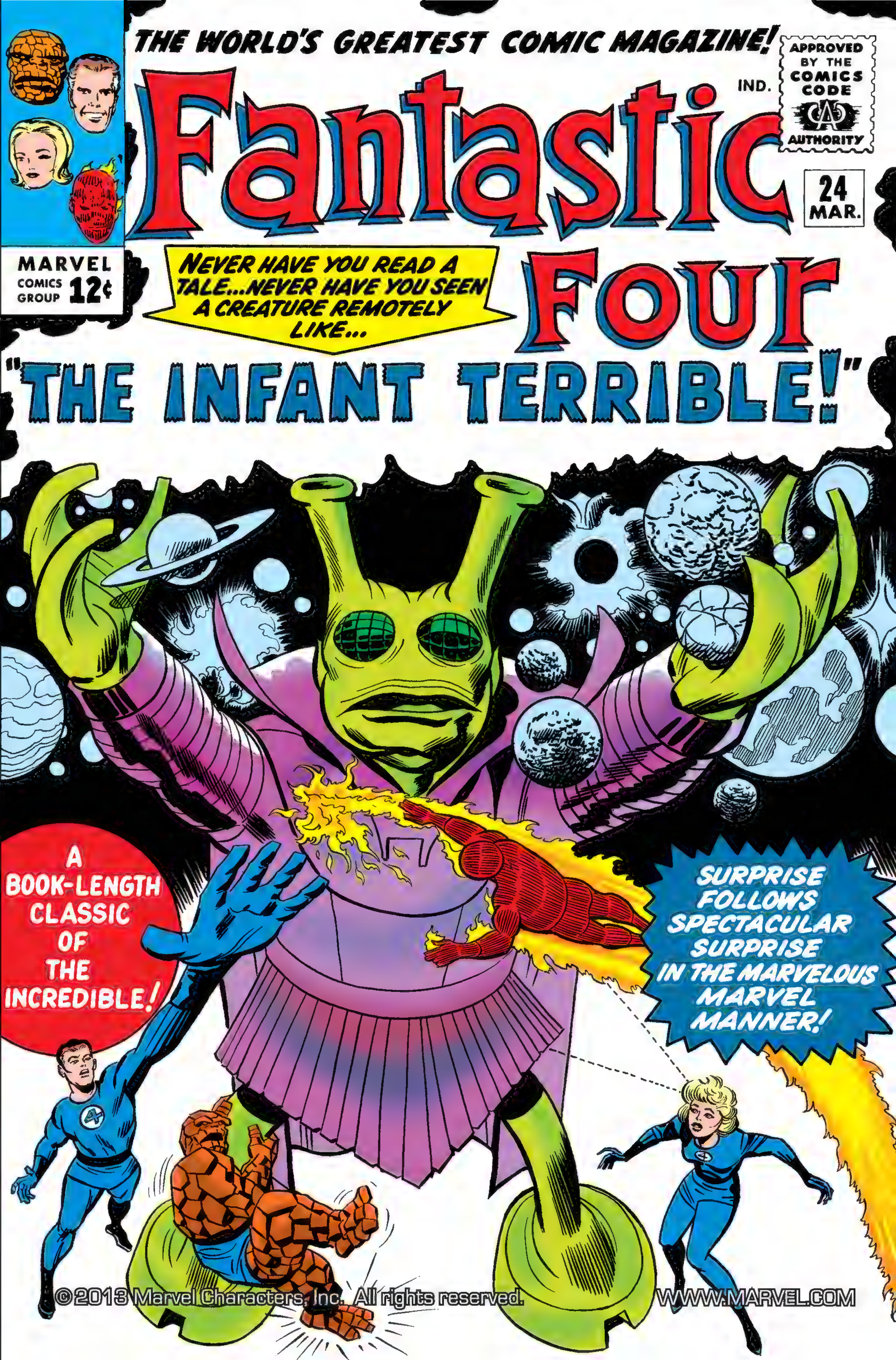

I KNOW DOOM IS ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE WALL! I'M GOING TO SEND MY INVISIBLE ENERGY BEAM RIGHT THROUGH... LIKE THIS...


THERE! NOW HE'S TRAPPED ALONG WITH US! IF WE DIE, SO DOES HE!


WHAT DO WE DO NOW?? SPACE IS CLOSIN' IN ON US!!
THERE'S NO WEAK SPOT ON THE WALL... I'VE MENTALLY SOUNDED EVERY INCH!
IT'S COMING CLOSER, DOOM! NOT MUCH TIME LEFT! REMEMBER, IF WE GO... YOU DO, TOO!


MOVE ASIDE! I'VE GOT TO FIND THE WIRES WHICH CAUSED THE IONIC DUST TO SETTLE ON THIS ROOM... I DON'T WANT TO DIE WITH YOU!
THE WORLD MUST NOT LOSE A MAGNIFICENT BRAIN LIKE MINE!


YOU SAY YOU WANNA COME IN AND LOOK FOR SOME WIRES?? HERE, PAL... I'LL **HELP** YA IN!
BEN! FORGET DOOM! IT'S TOO LATE FOR HIM TO DO ANYTHING! THE ROOM IS DISSOLVING TOO FAST!
YEAH? WELL, IF **ANYONE** GETS TOSSED INTO SPACE, DOC DOOM IS VOLUNTEERIN' TO GO FIRST! AREN'T YOU, DOC?
STAY BACK! KEEP AWAY, YOU BRAINLESS GARGOYLE! NO! **NO!**
HELLLLLLLLLLP....
WE'VE ONE SLIGHT CHANCE! THE SOLAR WAVES MIGHT **ONLY** BE ATTRACTED TO THIS ROOM! IONIC DUST IS EXPENSIVE... DOOM COULDN'T HAVE USED MUCH OF IT!
QUICK! PUT SUE THROUGH THE WALL AND THEN FOLLOW.. **FAST!**
LOOK!! THERE'S ONLY A FEW INCHES OF ROOM LEFT!! IN ANOTHER FEW SECONDS... **BLOOIE!**
THIS IS NO TIME TO ADMIRE THE SCENERY, BEN! **MOVE!**
Y'KNOW, I ALWAYS GET SLOPPY SENTIMENTAL WHEN SOME-ONE SAVES MY LIFE! YOU CAN **STAY** AS LEADER OF THE F.F., BUDDY! I DON'T MIND!
THANKS, BEN! YOUR ENTHUSIASM IS A JOY TO BEHOLD!
LATER... AFTER THE SOLAR WAVE HAS PASSED...
LOOK! THE ROOM IS **GONE!** NOTHING BUT SOME GIRDERS ARE LEFT!
WELL, WE WON'T HAVE TO WORRY ABOUT GETTING A NEW LEADER FOR A WHILE! LOOKS LIKE **YOU'LL** DO RIGHT FINE, BIG FELLA!
IF YA ASK **ME**, WE SHOULDA ELECTED **DOOM!**
THE END
DON'T SHED TOO MANY TEARS FOR OL' DOC DOOM! STAN AND JACK ARE ALREADY TRYING TO FIGURE OUT A WAY TO BRING HIM BACK! BUT, TILL THEY DO, IT'S LETTERS-PAGE TIME...


THE WORLD'S GREATEST COMIC MAGAZINE!
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Fantastic Four
24 MAR.
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NEVER HAVE YOU READ A TALE...NEVER HAVE YOU SEEN A CREATURE REMOTELY LIKE...
"THE INFANT TERRIBLE!"
A BOOK-LENGTH CLASSIC OF THE INCREDIBLE!
SURPRISE FOLLOWS SPECTACULAR SURPRISE IN THE MARVELOUS MARVEL MANNER!

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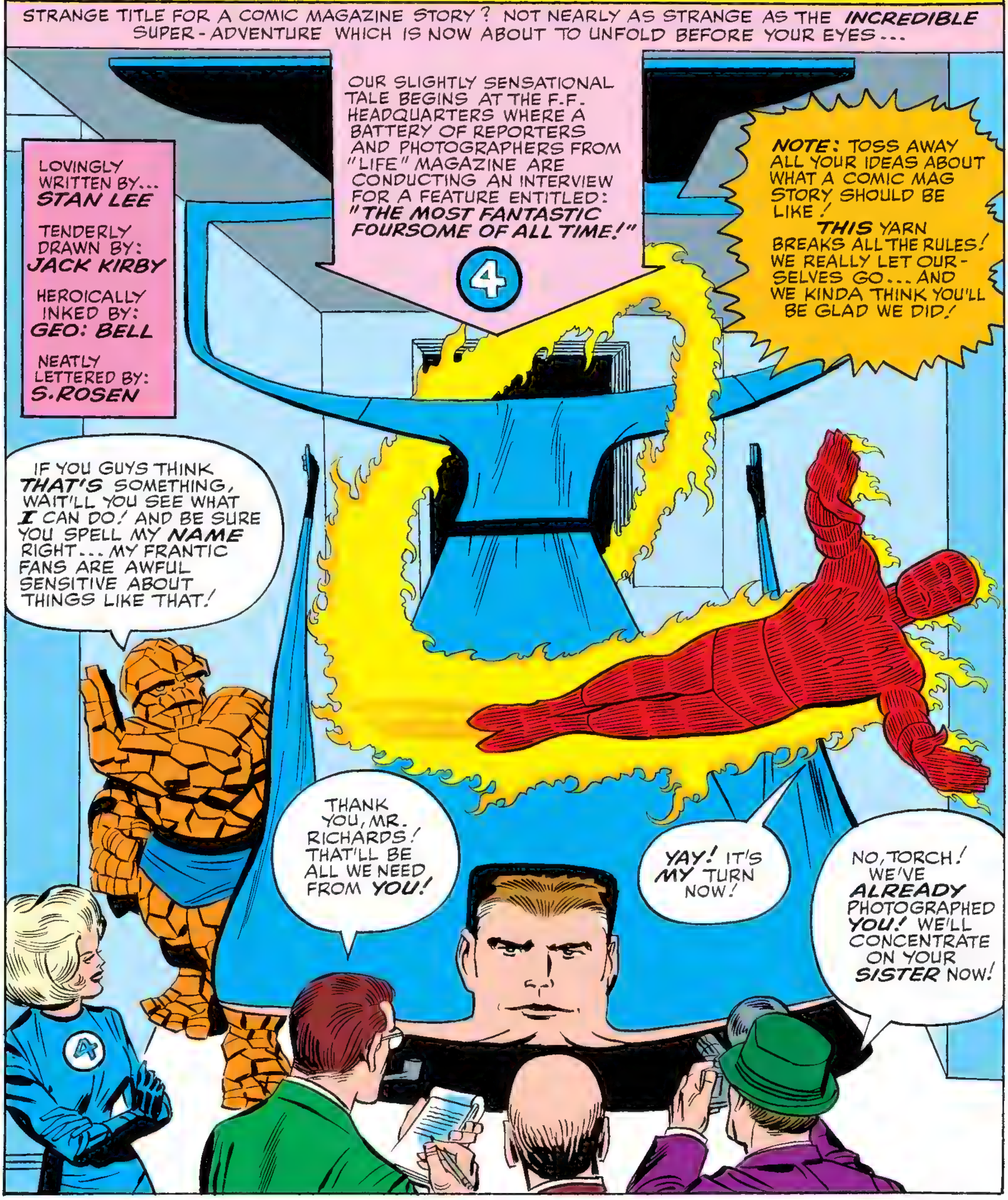
THE FABULOUS FANTASTIC FOUR, AND THE MYSTERY OF...

"The INFANT TERRIBLE!"


STRANGE TITLE FOR A COMIC MAGAZINE STORY? NOT NEARLY AS STRANGE AS THE *INCREDIBLE* SUPER-ADVENTURE WHICH IS NOW ABOUT TO UNFOLD BEFORE YOUR EYES...
LOVINGLY WRITTEN BY... **STAN LEE**
TENDERLY DRAWN BY: **JACK KIRBY**
HEROICALLY INKED BY: **GEO: BELL**
NEATLY LETTERED BY: **S. ROSEN**
OUR SLIGHTLY SENSATIONAL TALE BEGINS AT THE F.F. HEADQUARTERS WHERE A BATTERY OF REPORTERS AND PHOTOGRAPHERS FROM "LIFE" MAGAZINE ARE CONDUCTING AN INTERVIEW FOR A FEATURE ENTITLED: **"THE MOST FANTASTIC FOURSOME OF ALL TIME!"**
4
NOTE: TOSS AWAY ALL YOUR IDEAS ABOUT WHAT A COMIC MAG STORY SHOULD BE LIKE! **THIS** YARN BREAKS ALL THE RULES! WE REALLY LET OURSELVES GO... AND WE KINDA THINK YOU'LL BE GLAD WE DID!
IF YOU GUYS THINK **THAT'S** SOMETHING, WAIT'LL YOU SEE WHAT **I** CAN DO! AND BE SURE YOU SPELL MY **NAME** RIGHT... MY FRANTIC FANS ARE AWFUL SENSITIVE ABOUT THINGS LIKE THAT!
THANK YOU, MR. RICHARDS! THAT'LL BE ALL WE NEED FROM **YOU!**
YAY! IT'S **MY** TURN NOW!
NO, TORCH! WE'VE **ALREADY** PHOTOGRAPHED **YOU!** WE'LL CONCENTRATE ON YOUR **SISTER** NOW!
4

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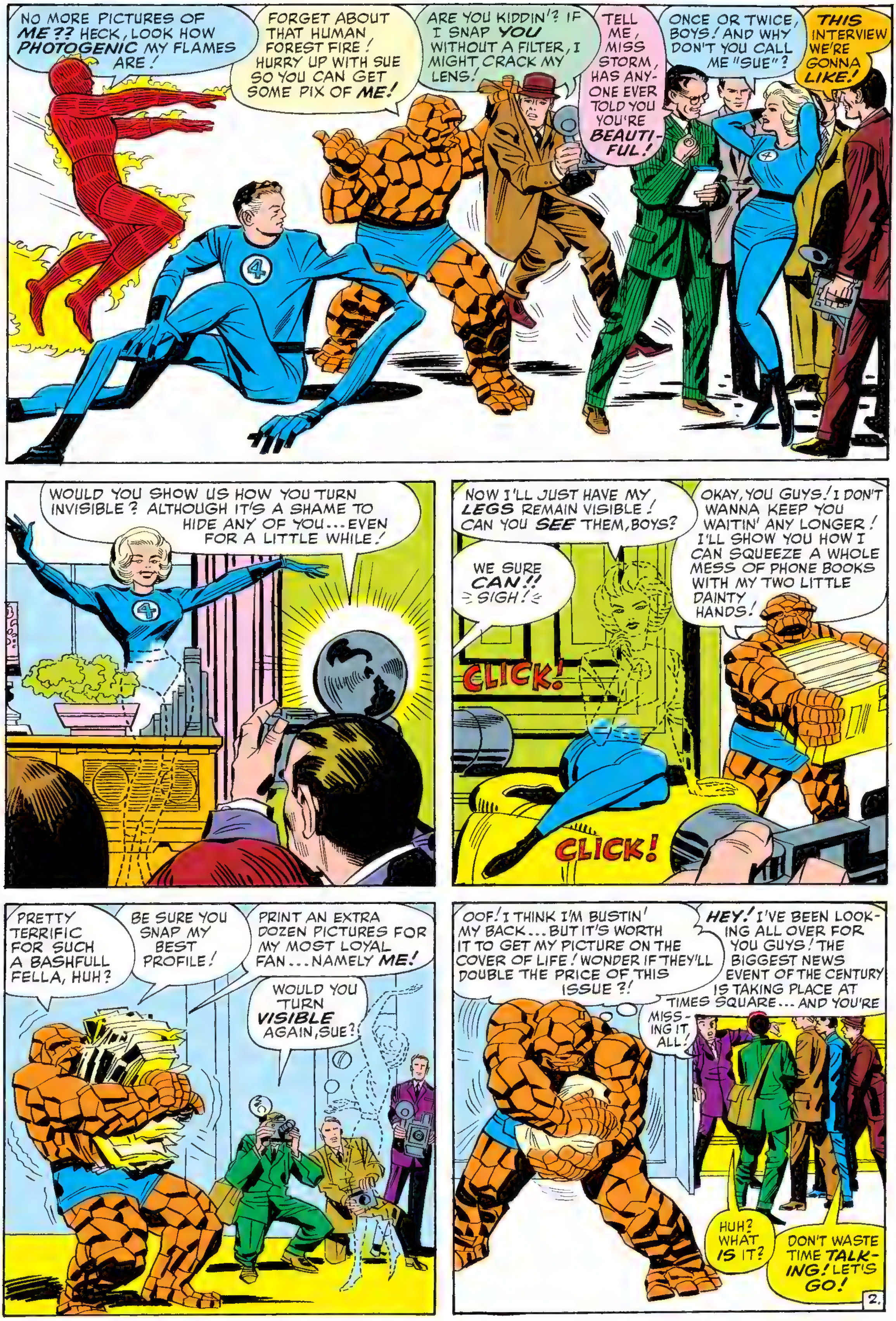
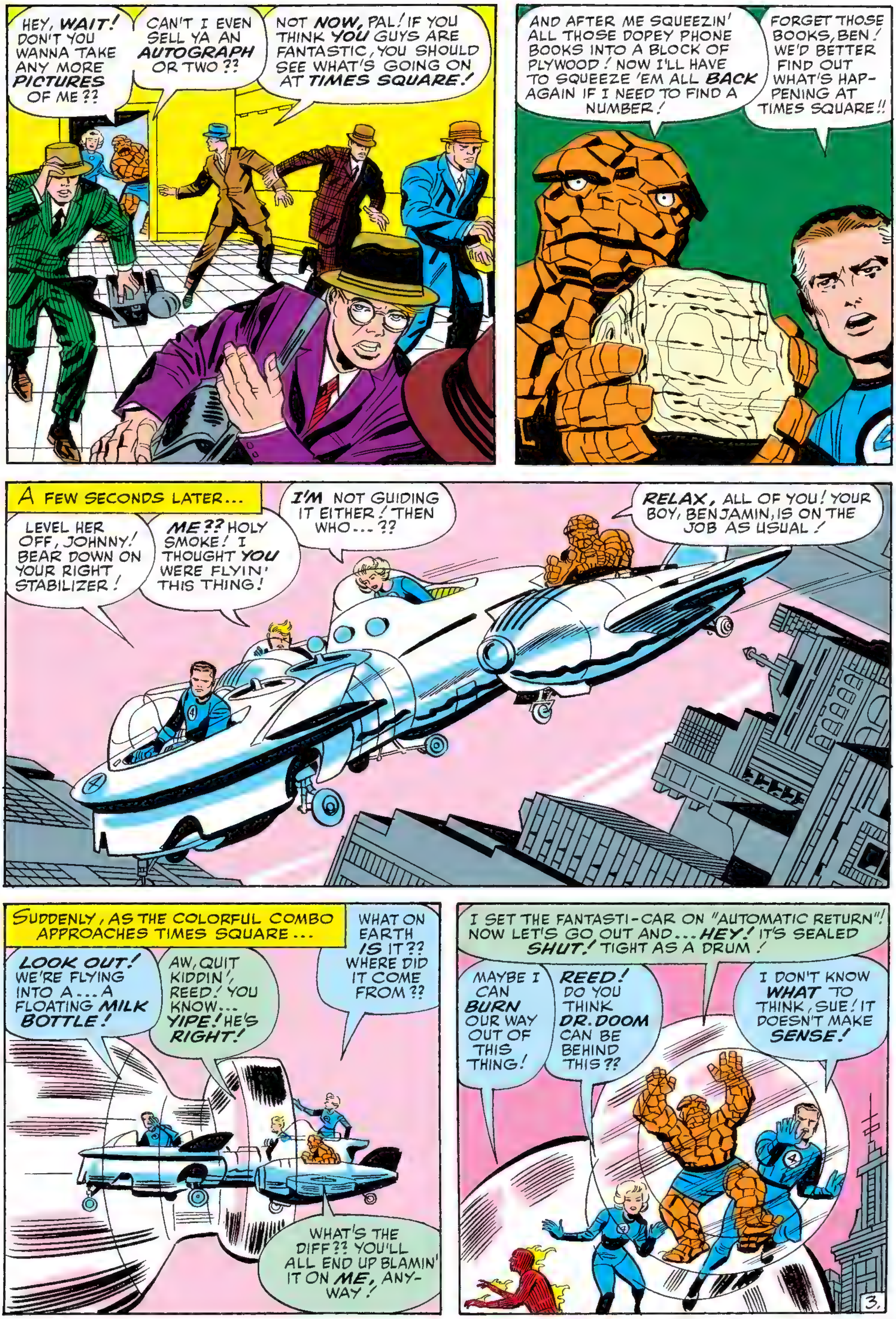

NO MORE PICTURES OF ME?? HECK, LOOK HOW PHOTOGENIC MY FLAMES ARE!
FORGET ABOUT THAT HUMAN FOREST FIRE! HURRY UP WITH SUE SO YOU CAN GET SOME PIX OF ME!
ARE YOU KIDDIN'? IF I SNAP YOU WITHOUT A FILTER, I MIGHT CRACK MY LENS!
TELL ME, MISS STORM, HAS ANYONE EVER TOLD YOU YOU'RE BEAUTIFUL!
ONCE OR TWICE, BOYS! AND WHY DON'T YOU CALL ME "SUE"?
THIS INTERVIEW WE'RE GONNA LIKE!
WOULD YOU SHOW US HOW YOU TURN INVISIBLE? ALTHOUGH IT'S A SHAME TO HIDE ANY OF YOU... EVEN FOR A LITTLE WHILE!
NOW I'LL JUST HAVE MY LEGS REMAIN VISIBLE! CAN YOU SEE THEM, BOYS?
WE SURE CAN!! SIGH!
CLICK!
CLICK!
OKAY, YOU GUYS! I DON'T WANNA KEEP YOU WAITIN' ANY LONGER! I'LL SHOW YOU HOW I CAN SQUEEZE A WHOLE MESS OF PHONE BOOKS WITH MY TWO LITTLE DAINTY HANDS!
PRETTY TERRIFIC FOR SUCH A BASHFULL FELLA, HUH?
BE SURE YOU SNAP MY BEST PROFILE!
PRINT AN EXTRA DOZEN PICTURES FOR MY MOST LOYAL FAN... NAMELY ME!
WOULD YOU TURN VISIBLE AGAIN, SUE?
OOF! I THINK I'M BUSTIN' MY BACK... BUT IT'S WORTH IT TO GET MY PICTURE ON THE COVER OF LIFE! WONDER IF THEY'LL DOUBLE THE PRICE OF THIS ISSUE?!
HEY! I'VE BEEN LOOKING ALL OVER FOR YOU GUYS! THE BIGGEST NEWS EVENT OF THE CENTURY IS TAKING PLACE AT TIMES SQUARE... AND YOU'RE MISSING IT ALL!
HUH? WHAT IS IT?
DON'T WASTE TIME TALKING! LET'S GO!


HEY, **WAIT!** DON'T YOU WANNA TAKE ANY MORE **PICTURES** OF ME??
CAN'T I EVEN SELL YA AN **AUTOGRAPH** OR TWO??
NOT **NOW,** PAL! IF YOU THINK **YOU** GUYS ARE FANTASTIC, YOU SHOULD SEE WHAT'S GOING ON AT **TIMES SQUARE!**
AND AFTER ME SQUEEZIN' ALL THOSE DOPEY PHONE BOOKS INTO A BLOCK OF PLYWOOD! NOW I'LL HAVE TO SQUEEZE 'EM ALL **BACK** AGAIN IF I NEED TO FIND A NUMBER!
FORGET THOSE BOOKS, BEN! WE'D BETTER FIND OUT WHAT'S HAPPENING AT TIMES SQUARE!!
A FEW SECONDS LATER...
LEVEL HER OFF, JOHNNY! BEAR DOWN ON YOUR RIGHT STABILIZER!
ME?? HOLY SMOKE! I THOUGHT **YOU** WERE FLYIN' THIS THING!
I'M NOT GUIDING IT EITHER! THEN WHO...??
RELAX, ALL OF YOU! YOUR BOY, BENJAMIN, IS ON THE JOB AS USUAL!
SUDDENLY, AS THE COLORFUL COMBO APPROACHES TIMES SQUARE...
LOOK OUT! WE'RE FLYING INTO A... A FLOATING **MILK BOTTLE!**
AW, QUIT KIDDIN', REED! YOU KNOW... **YIPE!** HE'S **RIGHT!**
WHAT ON EARTH **IS** IT?? WHERE DID IT COME FROM??
WHAT'S THE DIFF?? YOU'LL ALL END UP BLAMIN' IT ON **ME,** ANYWAY!
I SET THE FANTASTI-CAR ON "AUTOMATIC RETURN"! NOW LET'S GO OUT AND... **HEY!** IT'S SEALED **SHUT!** TIGHT AS A DRUM!
MAYBE I CAN **BURN** OUR WAY OUT OF THIS THING!
REED! DO YOU THINK **DR. DOOM** CAN BE BEHIND THIS??
I DON'T KNOW **WHAT** TO THINK, SUE! IT DOESN'T MAKE **SENSE!**
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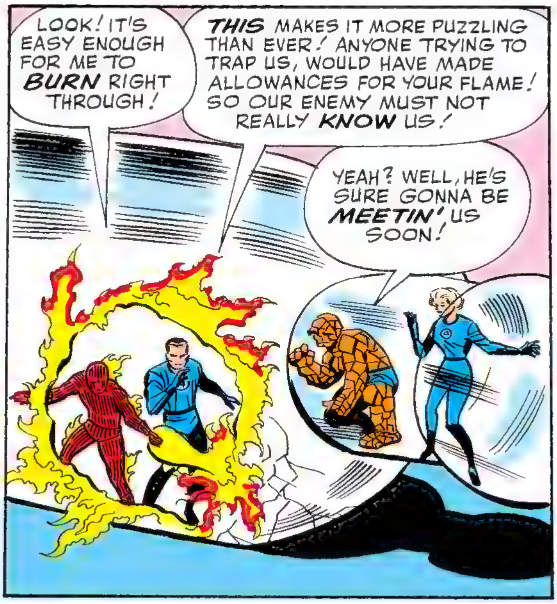
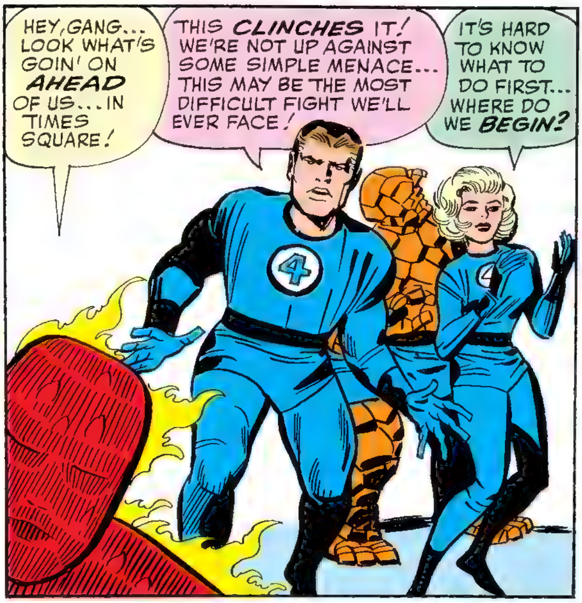
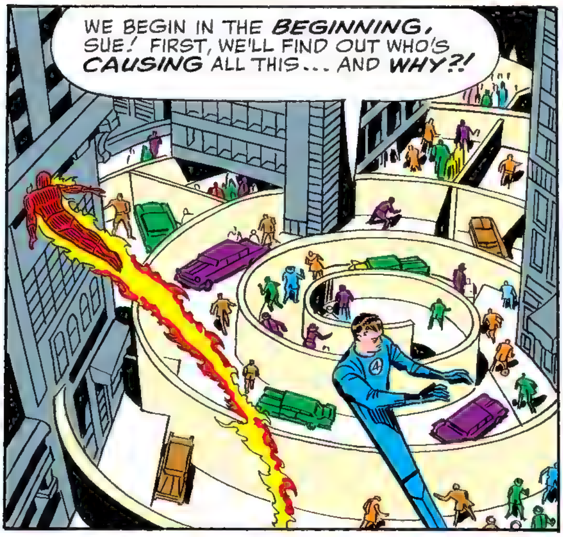
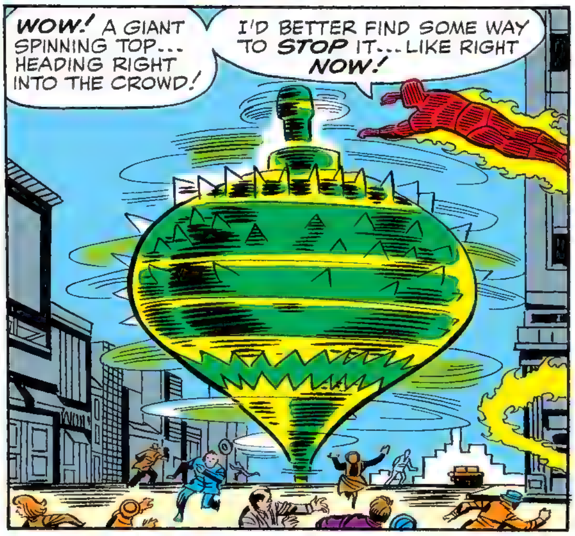
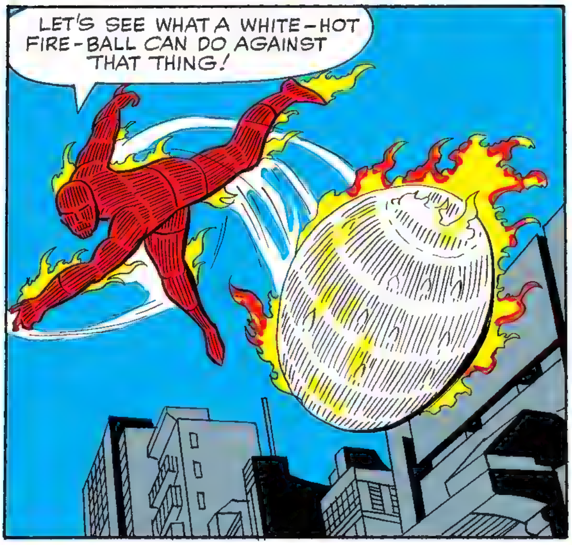
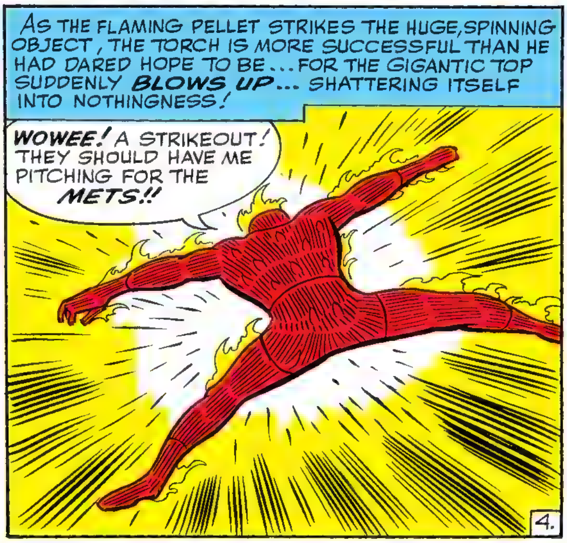

LOOK! IT'S EASY ENOUGH FOR ME TO **BURN** RIGHT THROUGH!
THIS MAKES IT MORE PUZZLING THAN EVER! ANYONE TRYING TO TRAP US, WOULD HAVE MADE ALLOWANCES FOR YOUR FLAME! SO OUR ENEMY MUST NOT REALLY **KNOW** US!
YEAH? WELL, HE'S SURE GONNA BE **MEETIN'** US SOON!

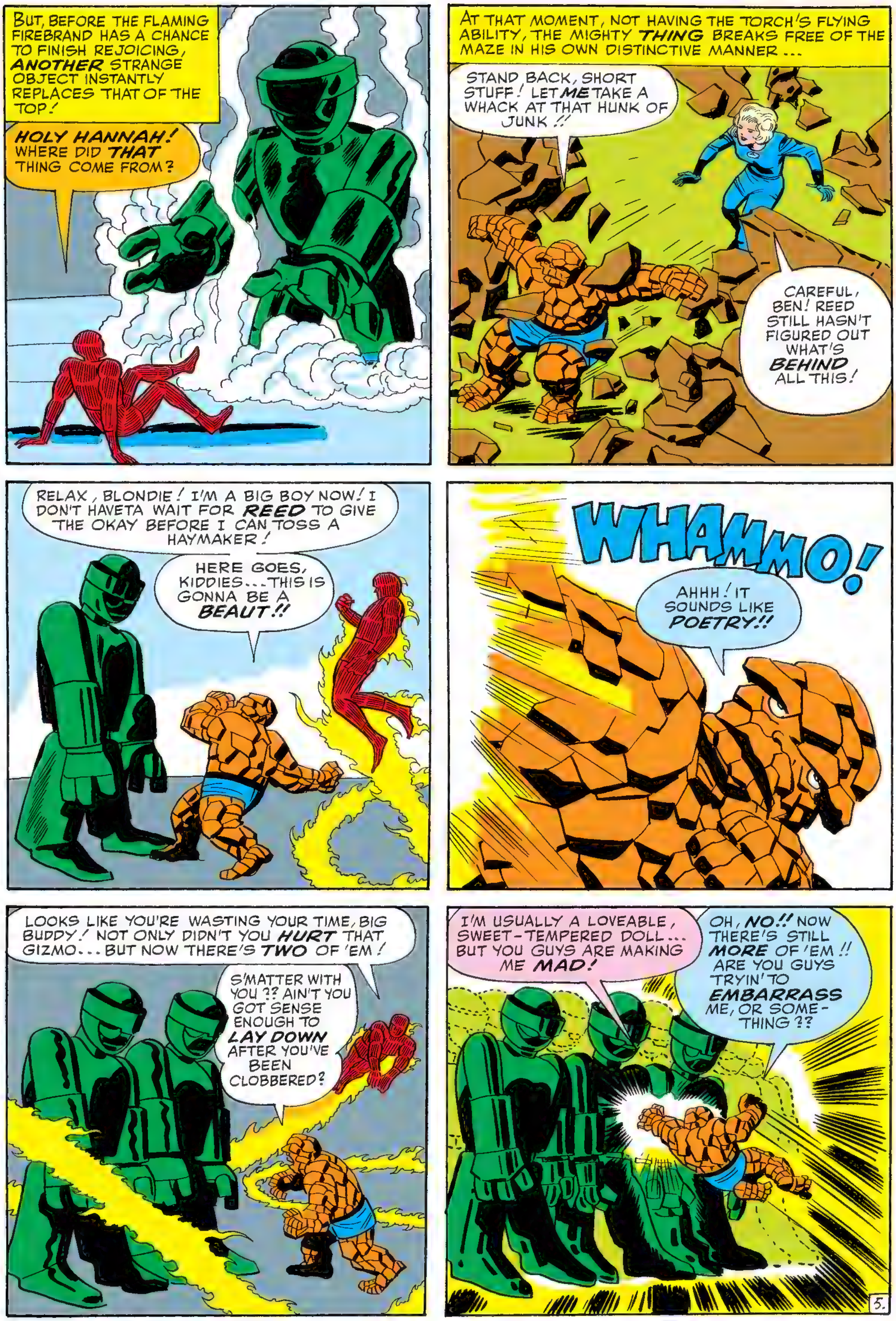

HEY, GANG... LOOK WHAT'S GOIN' ON **AHEAD** OF US... IN TIMES SQUARE!
THIS **CLINCHES** IT! WE'RE NOT UP AGAINST SOME SIMPLE MENACE... THIS MAY BE THE MOST DIFFICULT FIGHT WE'LL EVER FACE!
IT'S HARD TO KNOW WHAT TO DO FIRST... WHERE DO WE **BEGIN?**

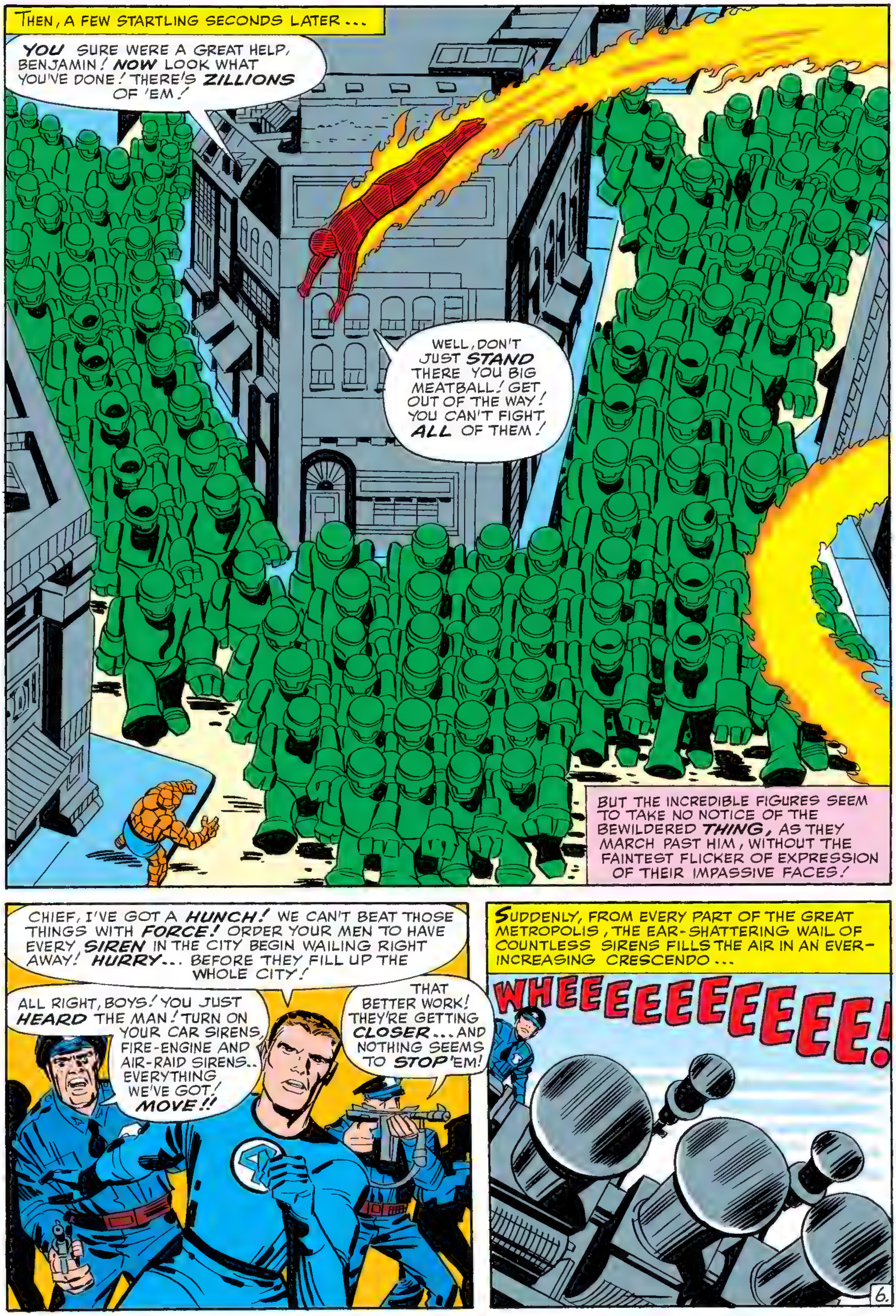

WE BEGIN IN THE **BEGINNING**, SUE! FIRST, WE'LL FIND OUT WHO'S **CAUSING** ALL THIS... AND **WHY?!**

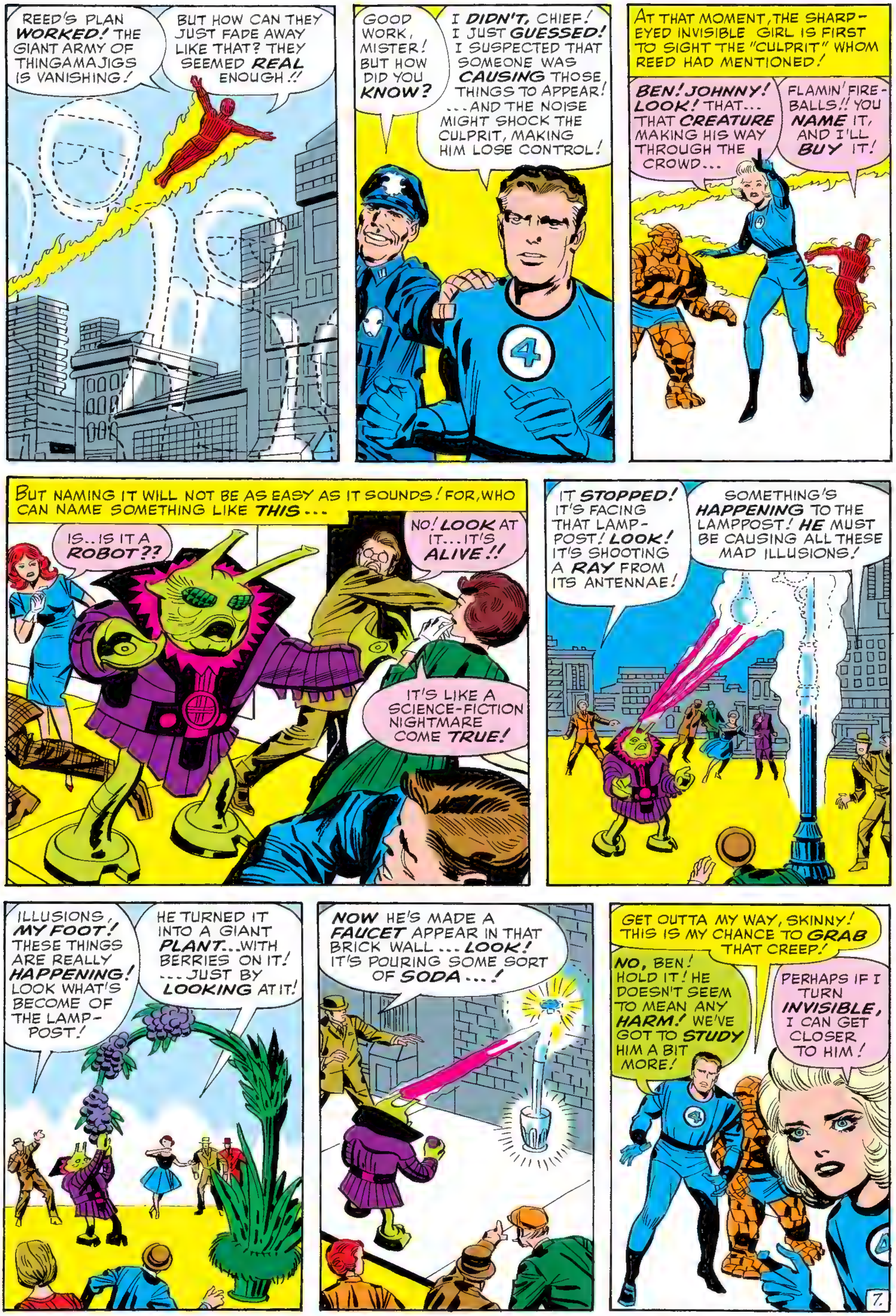

WOW! A GIANT SPINNING TOP... HEADING RIGHT INTO THE CROWD!
I'D BETTER FIND SOME WAY TO **STOP** IT... LIKE RIGHT **NOW!**

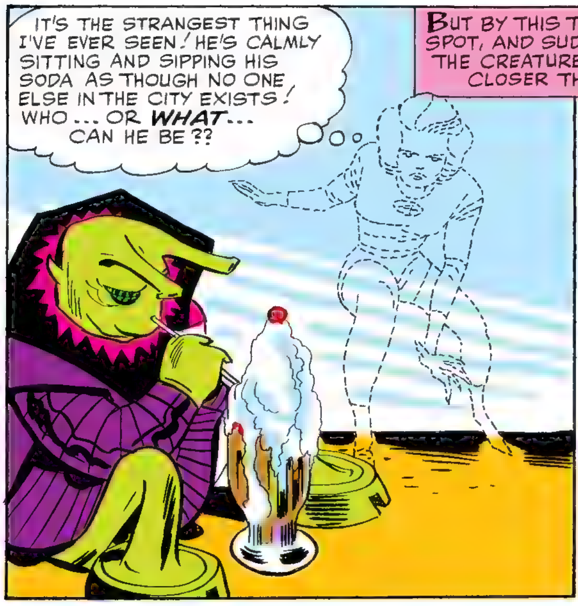

LET'S SEE WHAT A WHITE-HOT FIRE-BALL CAN DO AGAINST THAT THING!


AS THE FLAMING PELLET STRIKES THE HUGE, SPINNING OBJECT, THE TORCH IS MORE SUCCESSFUL THAN HE HAD DARED HOPE TO BE... FOR THE GIGANTIC TOP SUDDENLY **BLOWS UP**... SHATTERING ITSELF INTO NOTHINGNESS!
WOWEE! A STRIKEOUT! THEY SHOULD HAVE ME PITCHING FOR THE **METS!!**

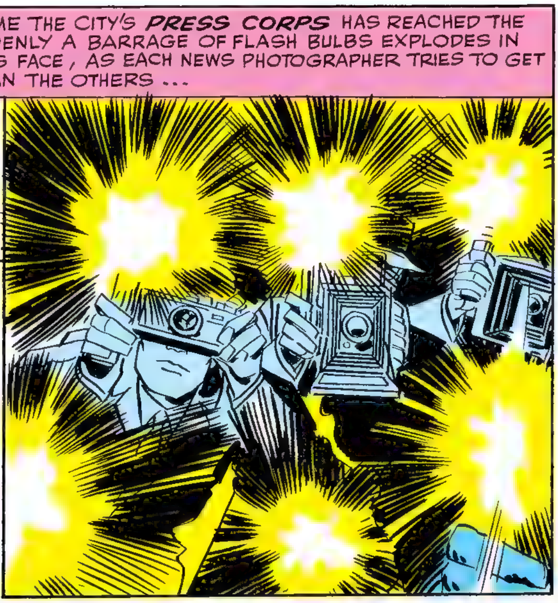

BUT, BEFORE THE FLAMING FIREBRAND HAS A CHANCE TO FINISH REJOICING, **ANOTHER** STRANGE OBJECT INSTANTLY REPLACES THAT OF THE TOP!
HOLY HANNAH! WHERE DID **THAT** THING COME FROM?
AT THAT MOMENT, NOT HAVING THE TORCH'S FLYING ABILITY, THE MIGHTY **THING** BREAKS FREE OF THE MAZE IN HIS OWN DISTINCTIVE MANNER...
STAND BACK, SHORT STUFF! LET **ME** TAKE A WHACK AT THAT HUNK OF JUNK!!
CAREFUL, BEN! REED STILL HASN'T FIGURED OUT WHAT'S **BEHIND** ALL THIS!
RELAX, BLONDIE! I'M A BIG BOY NOW! I DON'T HAVETA WAIT FOR **REED** TO GIVE THE OKAY BEFORE I CAN TOSS A HAYMAKER!
HERE GOES, KIDDIES...THIS IS GONNA BE A **BEAUT!!**
WHAMMO!
AHHH! IT SOUNDS LIKE **POETRY!!**
LOOKS LIKE YOU'RE WASTING YOUR TIME, BIG BUDDY! NOT ONLY DIDN'T YOU **HURT** THAT GIZMO...BUT NOW THERE'S **TWO** OF 'EM!
S'MATTER WITH YOU?? AIN'T YOU GOT SENSE ENOUGH TO **LAY DOWN** AFTER YOU'VE BEEN CLOBBERED?
I'M USUALLY A LOVEABLE, SWEET-TEMPERED DOLL...BUT YOU GUYS ARE MAKING ME **MAD!**
OH, **NO!!** NOW THERE'S STILL **MORE** OF 'EM!! ARE YOU GUYS TRYIN' TO **EMBARRASS** ME, OR SOMETHING??


THEN, A FEW STARTLING SECONDS LATER...
YOU SURE WERE A GREAT HELP, BENJAMIN! NOW LOOK WHAT YOU'VE DONE! THERE'S ZILLIONS OF 'EM!
WELL, DON'T JUST STAND THERE YOU BIG MEATBALL! GET OUT OF THE WAY! YOU CAN'T FIGHT ALL OF THEM!
BUT THE INCREDIBLE FIGURES SEEM TO TAKE NO NOTICE OF THE BEWILDERED THING, AS THEY MARCH PAST HIM, WITHOUT THE FAINTEST FLICKER OF EXPRESSION OF THEIR IMPASSIVE FACES!
CHIEF, I'VE GOT A HUNCH! WE CAN'T BEAT THOSE THINGS WITH FORCE! ORDER YOUR MEN TO HAVE EVERY SIREN IN THE CITY BEGIN WAILING RIGHT AWAY! HURRY... BEFORE THEY FILL UP THE WHOLE CITY!
ALL RIGHT, BOYS! YOU JUST HEARD THE MAN! TURN ON YOUR CAR SIRENS, FIRE-ENGINE AND AIR-RAID SIRENS.. EVERYTHING WE'VE GOT! MOVE!!
THAT BETTER WORK! THEY'RE GETTING CLOSER...AND NOTHING SEEMS TO STOP 'EM!
SUDDENLY, FROM EVERY PART OF THE GREAT METROPOLIS, THE EAR-SHATTERING WAIL OF COUNTLESS SIRENS FILLS THE AIR IN AN EVER-INCREASING CRESCENDO...
WHEEEEEEEEEEE!

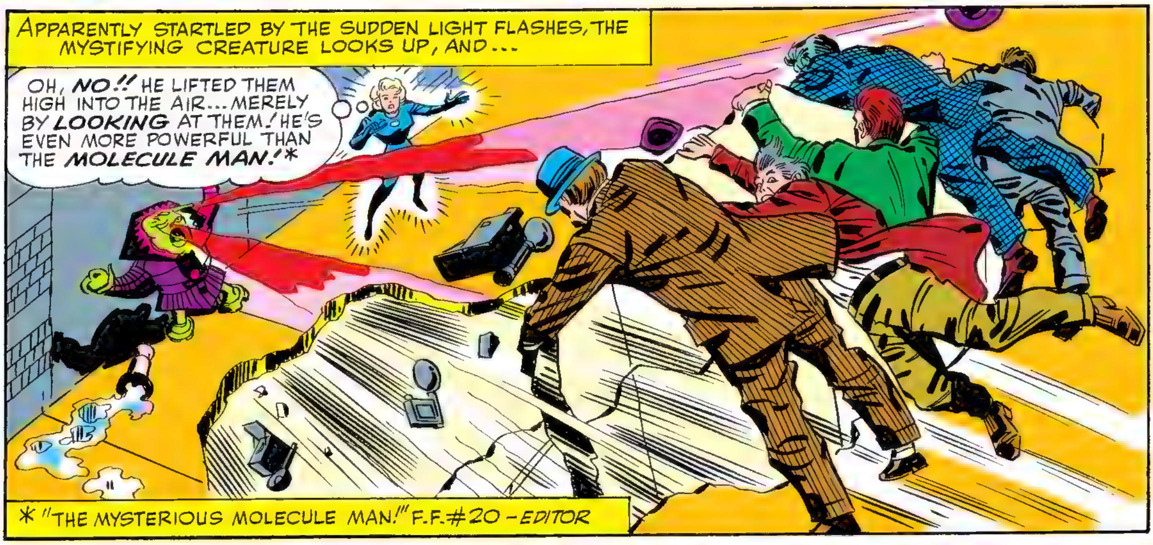

REED'S PLAN **WORKED!** THE GIANT ARMY OF THINGAMAJIGS IS VANISHING!
BUT HOW CAN THEY JUST FADE AWAY LIKE THAT? THEY SEEMED **REAL** ENOUGH!!
GOOD WORK, MISTER! BUT HOW DID YOU **KNOW?**
I **DIDN'T,** CHIEF! I JUST **GUESSED!** I SUSPECTED THAT SOMEONE WAS **CAUSING** THOSE THINGS TO APPEAR! ...AND THE NOISE MIGHT SHOCK THE CULPRIT, MAKING HIM LOSE CONTROL!
AT THAT MOMENT, THE SHARP-EYED INVISIBLE GIRL IS FIRST TO SIGHT THE "CULPRIT" WHOM REED HAD MENTIONED!
BEN! JOHNNY! LOOK! THAT... THAT **CREATURE** MAKING HIS WAY THROUGH THE CROWD...
FLAMIN' FIRE-BALLS!! YOU **NAME** IT, AND I'LL **BUY** IT!
BUT NAMING IT WILL NOT BE AS EASY AS IT SOUNDS! FOR, WHO CAN NAME SOMETHING LIKE **THIS**...
IS..IS IT A **ROBOT??**
NO! **LOOK** AT IT...IT'S **ALIVE!!**
IT'S LIKE A SCIENCE-FICTION NIGHTMARE COME **TRUE!**
IT **STOPPED!** IT'S FACING THAT LAMP-POST! **LOOK!** IT'S SHOOTING A **RAY** FROM ITS ANTENNAE!
SOMETHING'S **HAPPENING** TO THE LAMPPOST! **HE** MUST BE CAUSING ALL THESE MAD ILLUSIONS!
ILLUSIONS, **MY FOOT!** THESE THINGS ARE REALLY **HAPPENING!** LOOK WHAT'S BECOME OF THE LAMP-POST!
HE TURNED IT INTO A GIANT **PLANT**...WITH BERRIES ON IT! ...JUST BY **LOOKING** AT IT!
NOW HE'S MADE A **FAUCET** APPEAR IN THAT BRICK WALL ... **LOOK!** IT'S POURING SOME SORT OF **SODA**...!
GET OUTTA MY WAY, SKINNY! THIS IS MY CHANCE TO **GRAB** THAT CREEP!
NO, BEN! HOLD IT! HE DOESN'T SEEM TO MEAN ANY **HARM!** WE'VE GOT TO **STUDY** HIM A BIT MORE!
PERHAPS IF I TURN **INVISIBLE,** I CAN GET CLOSER TO HIM!


IT'S THE STRANGEST THING I'VE EVER SEEN! HE'S CALMLY SITTING AND SIPPING HIS SODA AS THOUGH NO ONE ELSE IN THE CITY EXISTS! WHO... OR *WHAT*... CAN HE BE??

BUT BY THIS TIME THE CITY'S ***PRESS CORPS*** HAS REACHED THE SPOT, AND SUDDENLY A BARRAGE OF FLASH BULBS EXPLODES IN THE CREATURE'S FACE, AS EACH NEWS PHOTOGRAPHER TRIES TO GET CLOSER THAN THE OTHERS...

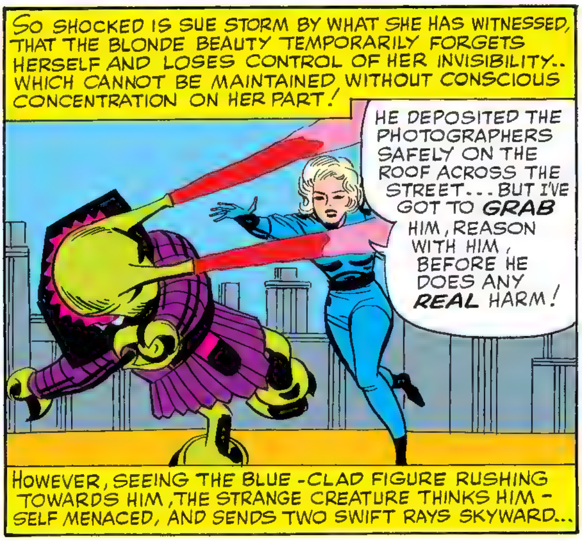


APPARENTLY STARTLED BY THE SUDDEN LIGHT FLASHES, THE MYSTIFYING CREATURE LOOKS UP, AND...


OH, ***NO!!*** HE LIFTED THEM HIGH INTO THE AIR... MERELY BY ***LOOKING*** AT THEM! HE'S EVEN MORE POWERFUL THAN THE ***MOLECULE MAN!****

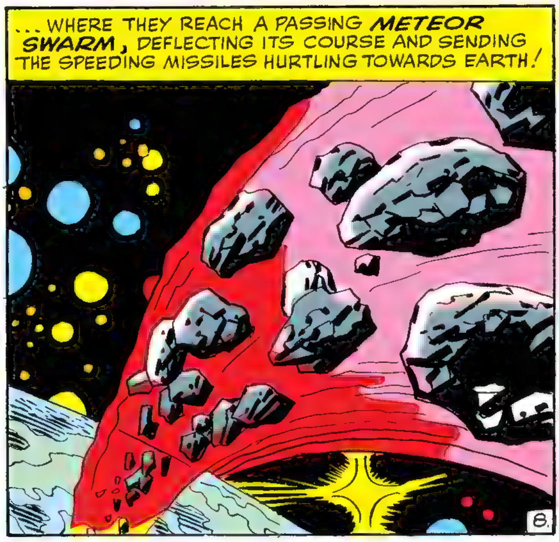
* "THE MYSTERIOUS MOLECULE MAN!" F.F. #20 – *EDITOR*

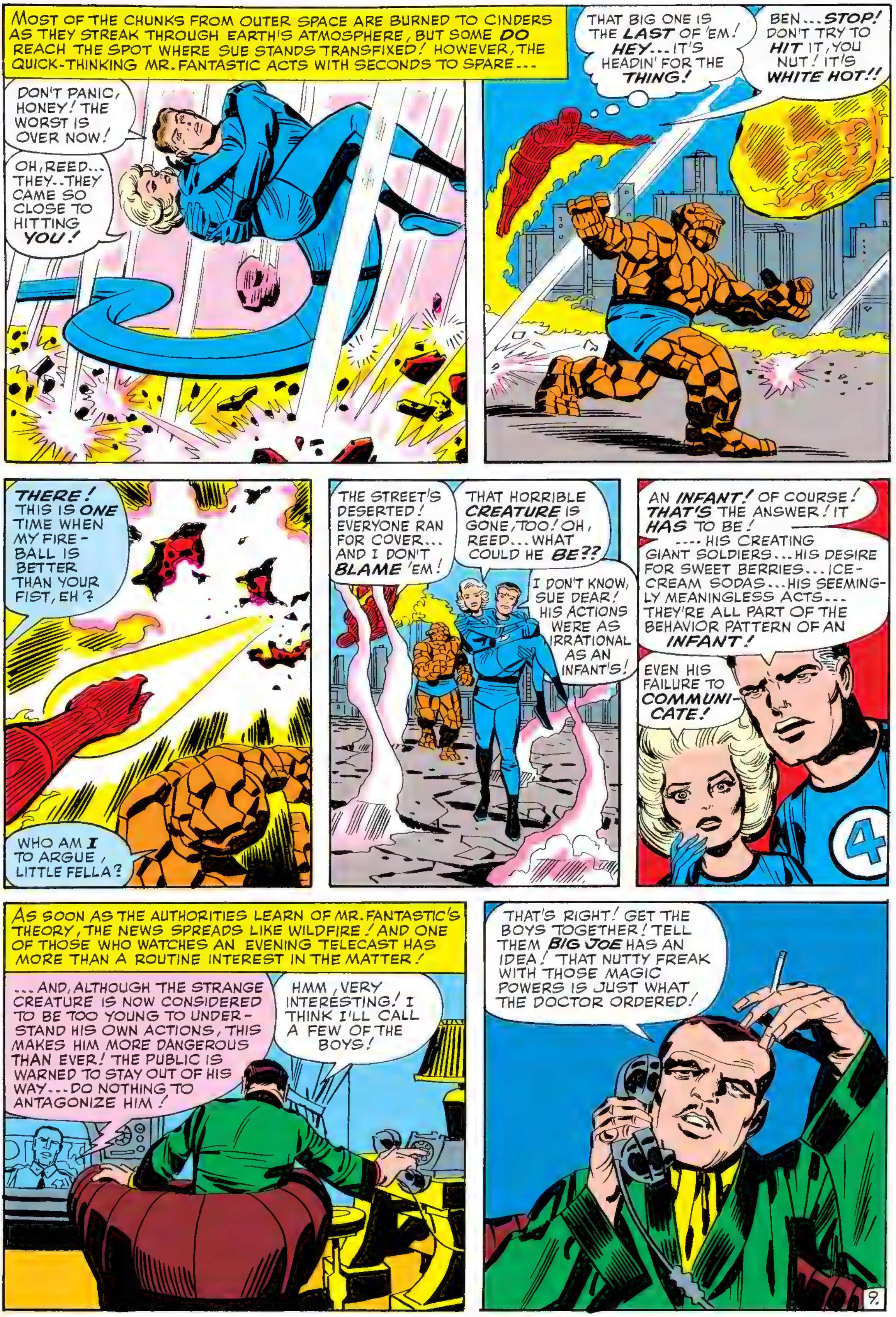
SO SHOCKED IS SUE STORM BY WHAT SHE HAS WITNESSED, THAT THE BLONDE BEAUTY TEMPORARILY FORGETS HERSELF AND LOSES CONTROL OF HER INVISIBILITY.. WHICH CANNOT BE MAINTAINED WITHOUT CONSCIOUS CONCENTRATION ON HER PART!

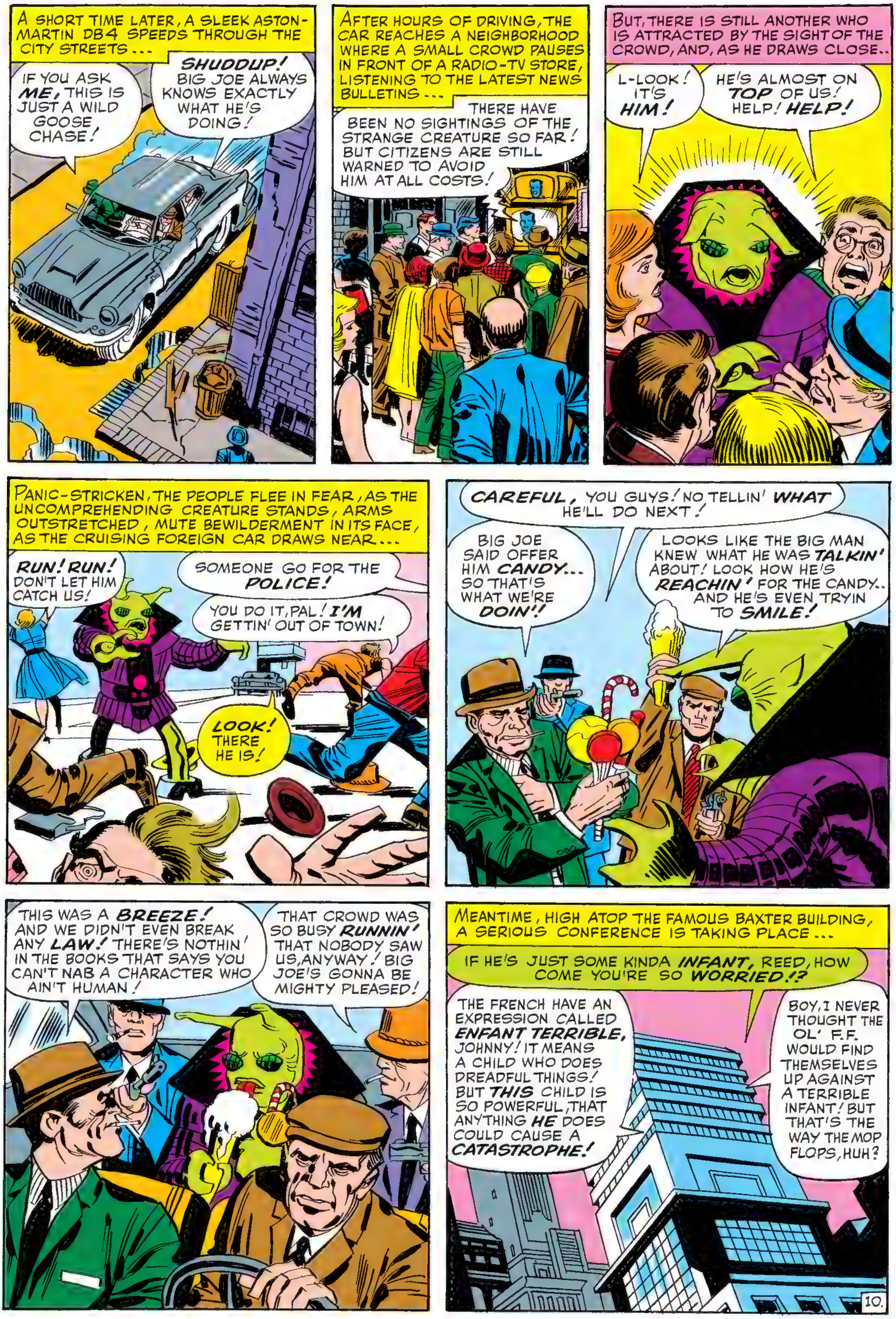

HE DEPOSITED THE PHOTOGRAPHERS SAFELY ON THE ROOF ACROSS THE STREET... BUT I'VE GOT TO ***GRAB*** HIM, REASON WITH HIM, BEFORE HE DOES ANY ***REAL*** HARM!

HOWEVER, SEEING THE BLUE-CLAD FIGURE RUSHING TOWARDS HIM, THE STRANGE CREATURE THINKS HIMSELF MENACED, AND SENDS TWO SWIFT RAYS SKYWARD...

...WHERE THEY REACH A PASSING ***METEOR SWARM***, DEFLECTING ITS COURSE AND SENDING THE SPEEDING MISSILES HURTLING TOWARDS EARTH!




MOST OF THE CHUNKS FROM OUTER SPACE ARE BURNED TO CINDERS AS THEY STREAK THROUGH EARTH'S ATMOSPHERE, BUT SOME **DO** REACH THE SPOT WHERE SUE STANDS TRANSFIXED! HOWEVER, THE QUICK-THINKING MR. FANTASTIC ACTS WITH SECONDS TO SPARE...
DON'T PANIC, HONEY! THE WORST IS OVER NOW!
OH, REED... THEY..THEY CAME SO CLOSE TO HITTING **YOU!**
THAT BIG ONE IS THE **LAST** OF 'EM! **HEY...** IT'S HEADIN' FOR THE **THING!**
BEN... **STOP!** DON'T TRY TO **HIT** IT, YOU NUT! IT'S **WHITE HOT!!**
THERE! THIS IS **ONE** TIME WHEN MY FIRE-BALL IS BETTER THAN YOUR FIST, EH?
WHO AM **I** TO ARGUE, LITTLE FELLA?
THE STREET'S DESERTED! EVERYONE RAN FOR COVER... AND I DON'T **BLAME** 'EM!
THAT HORRIBLE **CREATURE** IS GONE, TOO! OH, REED... WHAT COULD HE **BE??**
I DON'T KNOW, SUE DEAR! HIS ACTIONS WERE AS IRRATIONAL AS AN INFANT'S!
AN **INFANT!** OF COURSE! **THAT'S** THE ANSWER! IT **HAS** TO BE! .... HIS CREATING GIANT SOLDIERS... HIS DESIRE FOR SWEET BERRIES... ICE-CREAM SODAS... HIS SEEMINGLY MEANINGLESS ACTS... THEY'RE ALL PART OF THE BEHAVIOR PATTERN OF AN **INFANT!**
EVEN HIS FAILURE TO **COMMUNICATE!**
4
AS SOON AS THE AUTHORITIES LEARN OF MR. FANTASTIC'S THEORY, THE NEWS SPREADS LIKE WILDFIRE! AND ONE OF THOSE WHO WATCHES AN EVENING TELECAST HAS MORE THAN A ROUTINE INTEREST IN THE MATTER!
... AND, ALTHOUGH THE STRANGE CREATURE IS NOW CONSIDERED TO BE TOO YOUNG TO UNDERSTAND HIS OWN ACTIONS, THIS MAKES HIM MORE DANGEROUS THAN EVER! THE PUBLIC IS WARNED TO STAY OUT OF HIS WAY... DO NOTHING TO ANTAGONIZE HIM!
HMM, VERY INTERESTING! I THINK I'LL CALL A FEW OF THE BOYS!
THAT'S RIGHT! GET THE BOYS TOGETHER! TELL THEM **BIG JOE** HAS AN IDEA! THAT NUTTY FREAK WITH THOSE MAGIC POWERS IS JUST WHAT THE DOCTOR ORDERED!


A SHORT TIME LATER, A SLEEK ASTON-MARTIN DB4 SPEEDS THROUGH THE CITY STREETS ...
IF YOU ASK *ME*, THIS IS JUST A WILD GOOSE CHASE!
SHUDDUP! BIG JOE ALWAYS KNOWS EXACTLY WHAT HE'S DOING!
AFTER HOURS OF DRIVING, THE CAR REACHES A NEIGHBORHOOD WHERE A SMALL CROWD PAUSES IN FRONT OF A RADIO-TV STORE, LISTENING TO THE LATEST NEWS BULLETINS ...
THERE HAVE BEEN NO SIGHTINGS OF THE STRANGE CREATURE SO FAR! BUT CITIZENS ARE STILL WARNED TO AVOID HIM AT ALL COSTS!
BUT, THERE IS STILL ANOTHER WHO IS ATTRACTED BY THE SIGHT OF THE CROWD, AND, AS HE DRAWS CLOSE..
L-LOOK! IT'S *HIM!*
HE'S ALMOST ON *TOP* OF US! HELP! *HELP!*
PANIC-STRICKEN, THE PEOPLE FLEE IN FEAR, AS THE UNCOMPREHENDING CREATURE STANDS, ARMS OUTSTRETCHED, MUTE BEWILDERMENT IN ITS FACE, AS THE CRUISING FOREIGN CAR DRAWS NEAR ...
RUN! RUN! DON'T LET HIM CATCH US!
SOMEONE GO FOR THE *POLICE!*
YOU DO IT, PAL! *I'M* GETTIN' OUT OF TOWN!
LOOK! THERE HE IS!
CAREFUL, YOU GUYS! NO TELLIN' *WHAT* HE'LL DO NEXT!
BIG JOE SAID OFFER HIM *CANDY*... SO THAT'S WHAT WE'RE *DOIN'!*
LOOKS LIKE THE BIG MAN KNEW WHAT HE WAS *TALKIN'* ABOUT! LOOK HOW HE'S *REACHIN'* FOR THE CANDY.. AND HE'S EVEN TRYIN TO *SMILE!*
THIS WAS A *BREEZE!* AND WE DIDN'T EVEN BREAK ANY *LAW!* THERE'S NOTHIN' IN THE BOOKS THAT SAYS YOU CAN'T NAB A CHARACTER WHO AIN'T HUMAN!
THAT CROWD WAS SO BUSY *RUNNIN'* THAT NOBODY SAW US, ANYWAY! BIG JOE'S GONNA BE MIGHTY PLEASED!
MEANTIME, HIGH ATOP THE FAMOUS BAXTER BUILDING, A SERIOUS CONFERENCE IS TAKING PLACE ...
IF HE'S JUST SOME KINDA *INFANT*, REED, HOW COME YOU'RE SO *WORRIED!?*
THE FRENCH HAVE AN EXPRESSION CALLED *ENFANT TERRIBLE*, JOHNNY! IT MEANS A CHILD WHO DOES DREADFUL THINGS! BUT *THIS* CHILD IS SO POWERFUL, THAT ANYTHING *HE* DOES COULD CAUSE A *CATASTROPHE!*
BOY, I NEVER THOUGHT THE OL' F.F. WOULD FIND THEMSELVES UP AGAINST A TERRIBLE INFANT! BUT THAT'S THE WAY THE MOP FLOPS, HUH?
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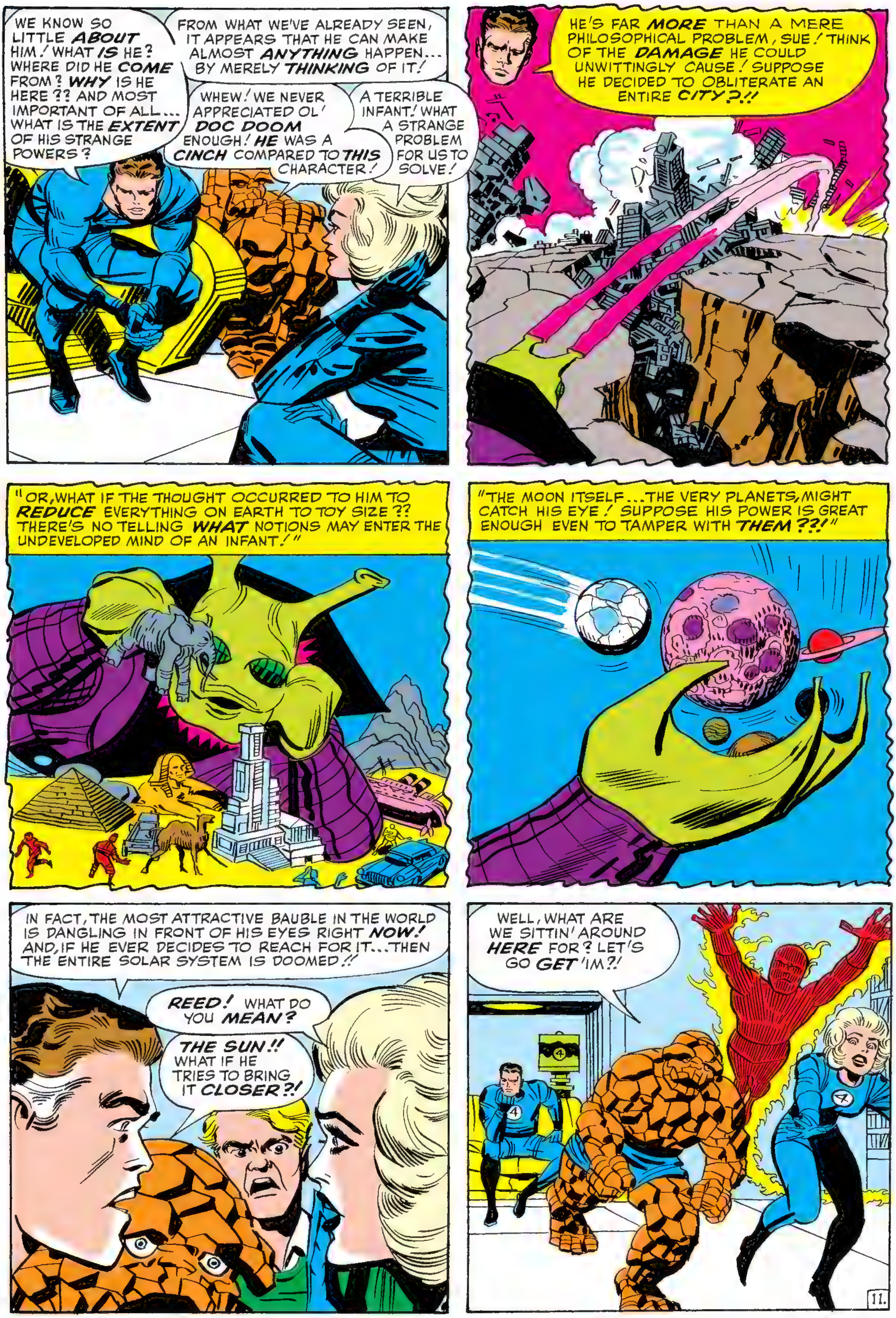
WE KNOW SO LITTLE ABOUT HIM! WHAT IS HE? WHERE DID HE COME FROM? WHY IS HE HERE?? AND MOST IMPORTANT OF ALL... WHAT IS THE EXTENT OF HIS STRANGE POWERS?
FROM WHAT WE'VE ALREADY SEEN, IT APPEARS THAT HE CAN MAKE ALMOST ANYTHING HAPPEN... BY MERELY THINKING OF IT!
WHEW! WE NEVER APPRECIATED OL' DOC DOOM ENOUGH! HE WAS A CINCH COMPARED TO THIS CHARACTER!
A TERRIBLE INFANT! WHAT A STRANGE PROBLEM FOR US TO SOLVE!
HE'S FAR MORE THAN A MERE PHILOSOPHICAL PROBLEM, SUE! THINK OF THE DAMAGE HE COULD UNWITTINGLY CAUSE! SUPPOSE HE DECIDED TO OBLITERATE AN ENTIRE CITY?!!
"OR, WHAT IF THE THOUGHT OCCURRED TO HIM TO REDUCE EVERYTHING ON EARTH TO TOY SIZE?? THERE'S NO TELLING WHAT NOTIONS MAY ENTER THE UNDEVELOPED MIND OF AN INFANT!"
"THE MOON ITSELF... THE VERY PLANETS, MIGHT CATCH HIS EYE! SUPPOSE HIS POWER IS GREAT ENOUGH EVEN TO TAMPER WITH THEM??!"
IN FACT, THE MOST ATTRACTIVE BAUBLE IN THE WORLD IS DANGLING IN FRONT OF HIS EYES RIGHT NOW! AND, IF HE EVER DECIDES TO REACH FOR IT... THEN THE ENTIRE SOLAR SYSTEM IS DOOMED!!
REED! WHAT DO YOU MEAN?
THE SUN!! WHAT IF HE TRIES TO BRING IT CLOSER?!
WELL, WHAT ARE WE SITTIN' AROUND HERE FOR? LET'S GO GET 'IM?!
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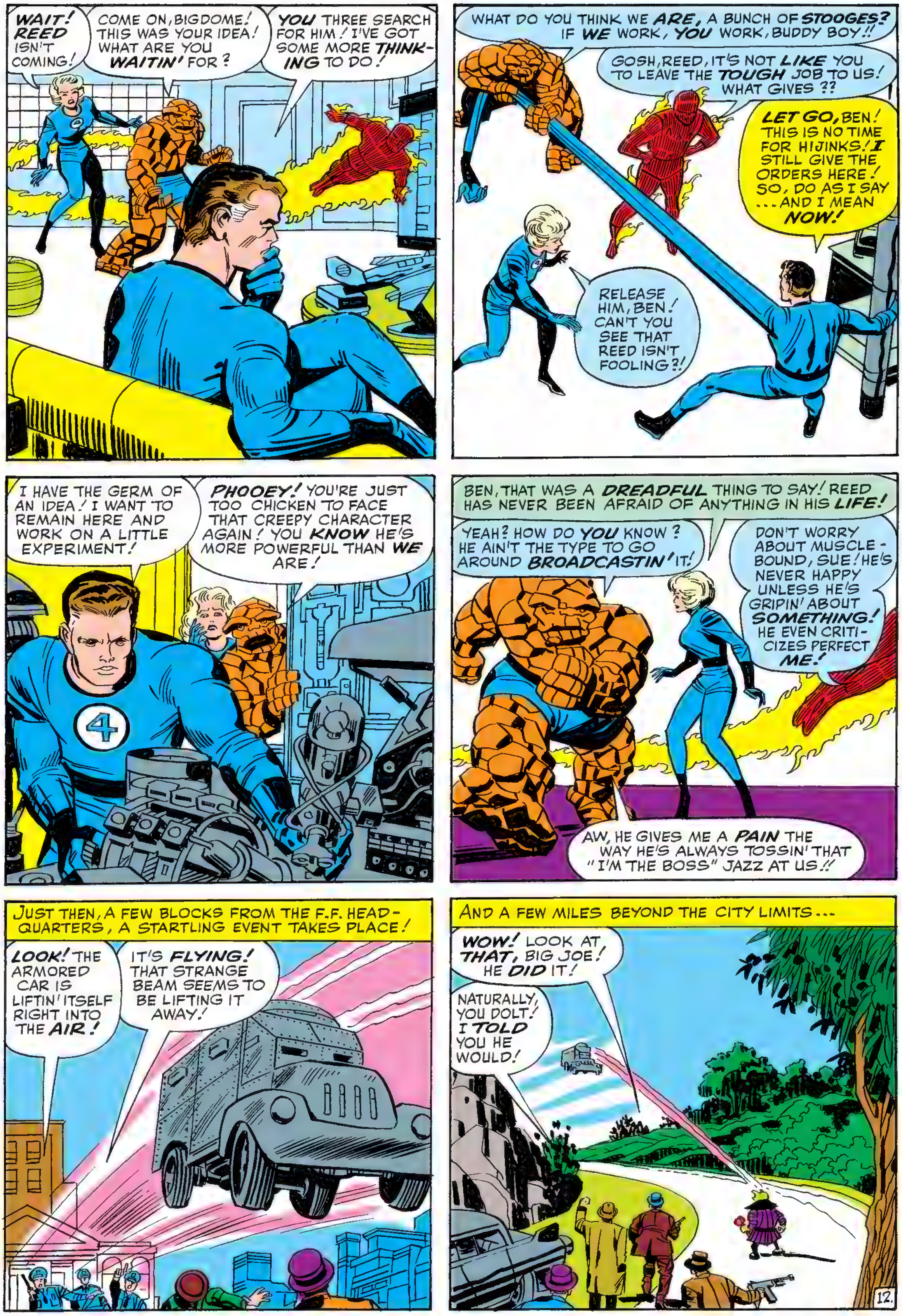
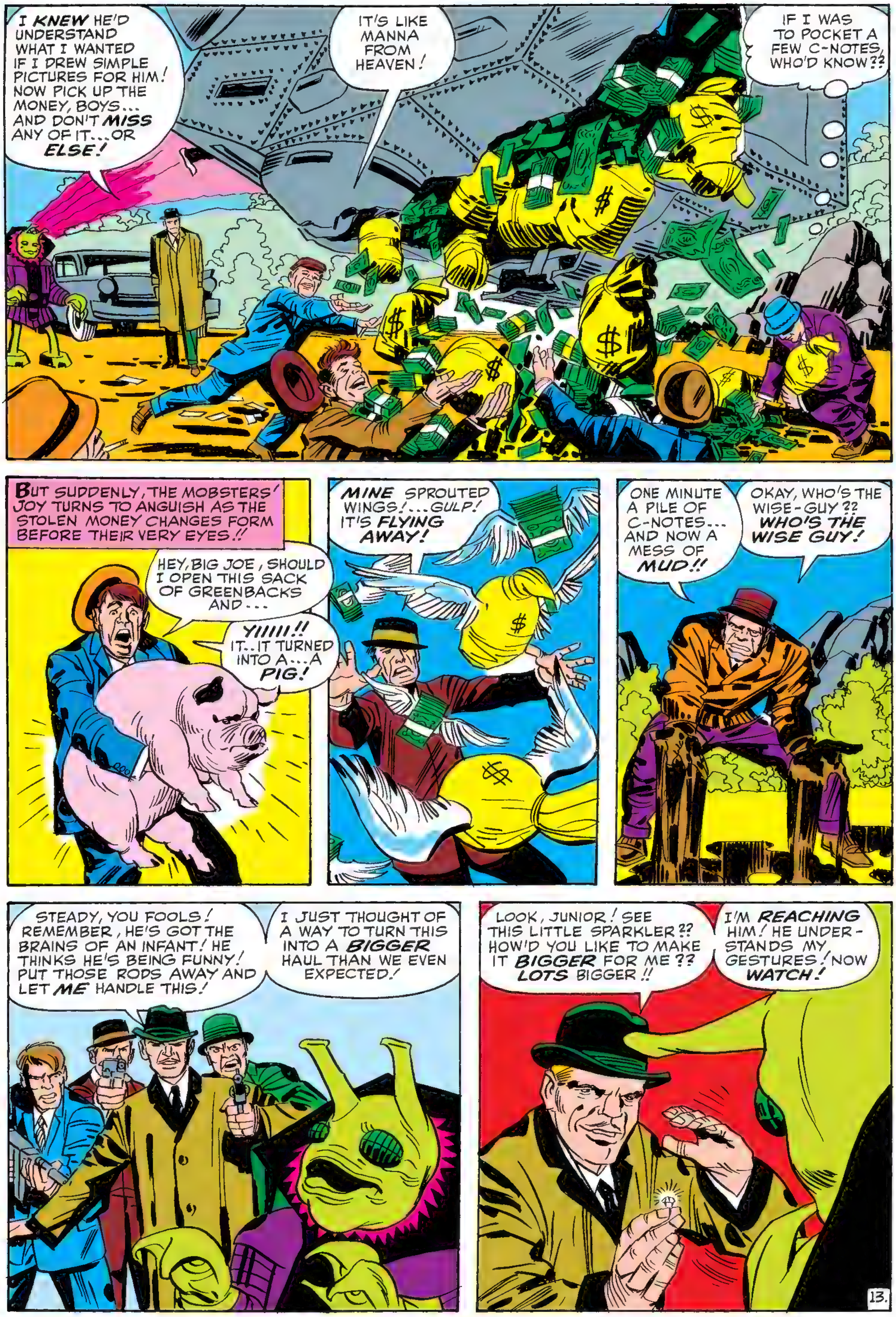
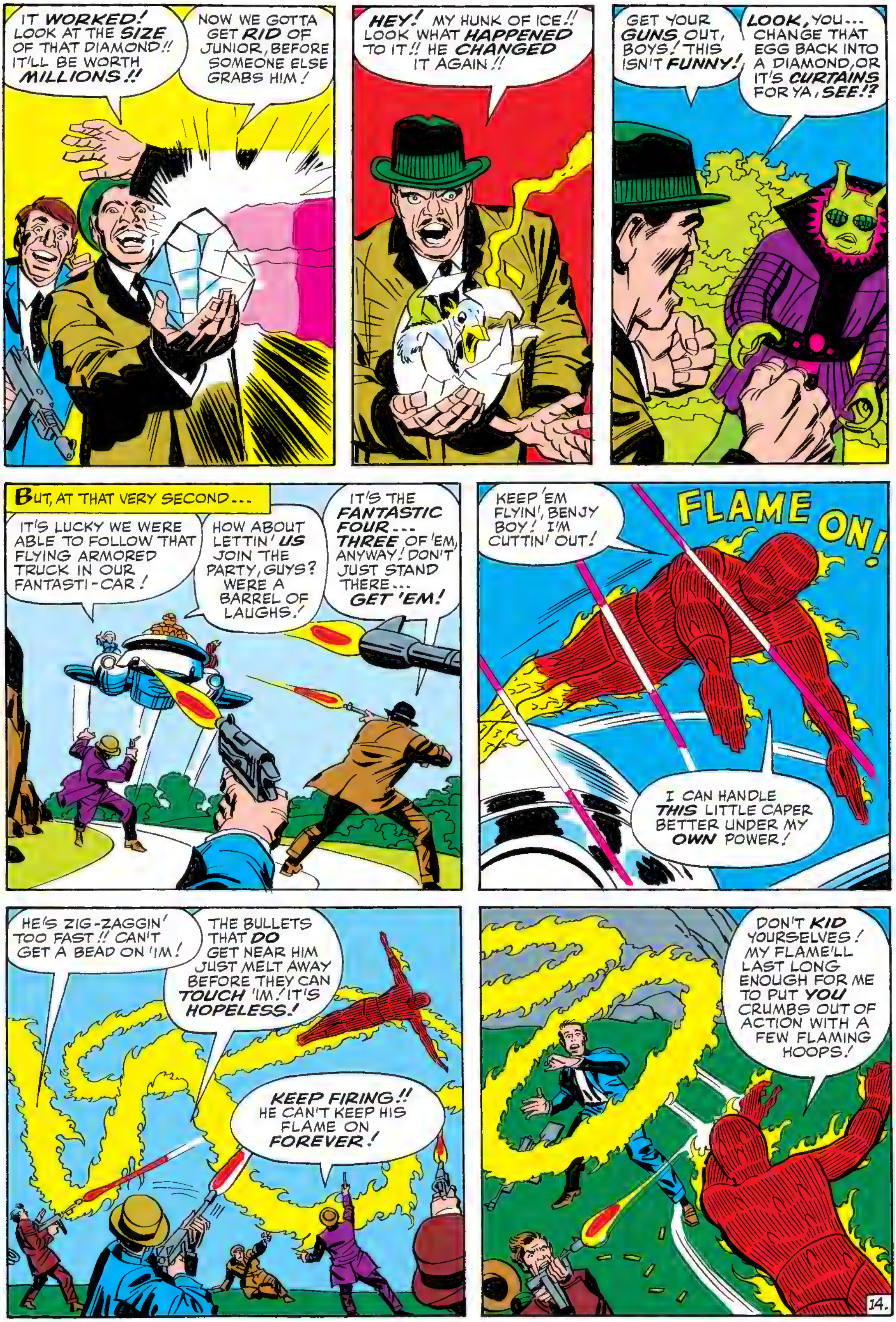
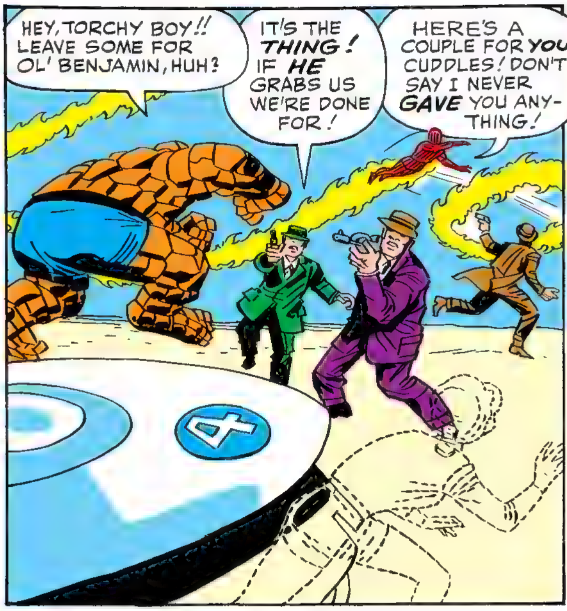
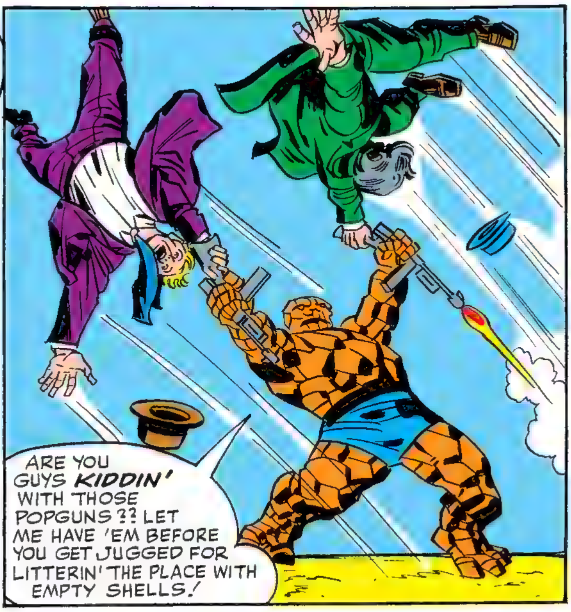
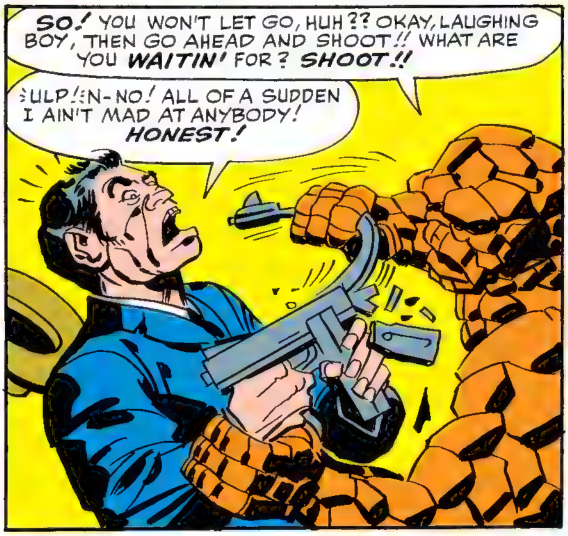

WAIT! REED ISN'T COMING!
COME ON, BIGDOME! THIS WAS YOUR IDEA! WHAT ARE YOU WAITIN' FOR?
YOU THREE SEARCH FOR HIM! I'VE GOT SOME MORE THINKING TO DO!
WHAT DO YOU THINK WE ARE, A BUNCH OF STOOGES? IF WE WORK, YOU WORK, BUDDY BOY!!
GOSH, REED, IT'S NOT LIKE YOU TO LEAVE THE TOUGH JOB TO US! WHAT GIVES??
LET GO, BEN! THIS IS NO TIME FOR HIJINKS! I STILL GIVE THE ORDERS HERE! SO, DO AS I SAY ...AND I MEAN NOW!
RELEASE HIM, BEN! CAN'T YOU SEE THAT REED ISN'T FOOLING?!
I HAVE THE GERM OF AN IDEA! I WANT TO REMAIN HERE AND WORK ON A LITTLE EXPERIMENT!
PHOOEY! YOU'RE JUST TOO CHICKEN TO FACE THAT CREEPY CHARACTER AGAIN! YOU KNOW HE'S MORE POWERFUL THAN WE ARE!
BEN, THAT WAS A DREADFUL THING TO SAY! REED HAS NEVER BEEN AFRAID OF ANYTHING IN HIS LIFE!
YEAH? HOW DO YOU KNOW? HE AIN'T THE TYPE TO GO AROUND BROADCASTIN' IT!
DON'T WORRY ABOUT MUSCLE-BOUND, SUE! HE'S NEVER HAPPY UNLESS HE'S GRIPIN' ABOUT SOMETHING! HE EVEN CRITICIZES PERFECT ME!
AW, HE GIVES ME A PAIN THE WAY HE'S ALWAYS TOSSIN' THAT "I'M THE BOSS" JAZZ AT US!!
JUST THEN, A FEW BLOCKS FROM THE F.F. HEADQUARTERS, A STARTLING EVENT TAKES PLACE!
LOOK! THE ARMORED CAR IS LIFTIN' ITSELF RIGHT INTO THE AIR!
IT'S FLYING! THAT STRANGE BEAM SEEMS TO BE LIFTING IT AWAY!
AND A FEW MILES BEYOND THE CITY LIMITS...
WOW! LOOK AT THAT, BIG JOE! HE DID IT!
NATURALLY, YOU DOLT! I TOLD YOU HE WOULD!

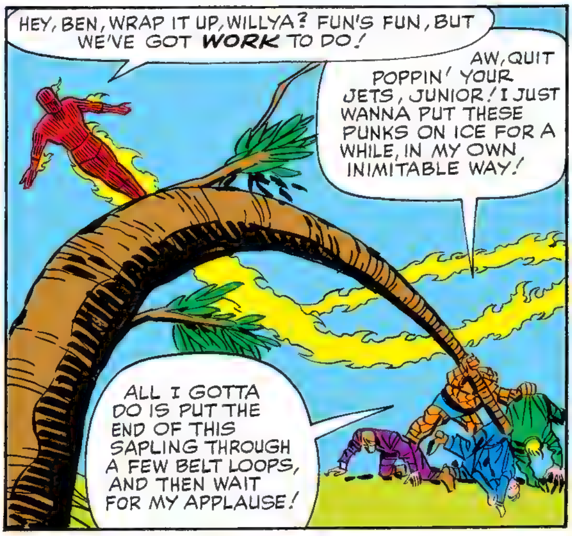

I KNEW HE'D UNDERSTAND WHAT I WANTED IF I DREW SIMPLE PICTURES FOR HIM! NOW PICK UP THE MONEY, BOYS... AND DON'T MISS ANY OF IT...OR ELSE!
IT'S LIKE MANNA FROM HEAVEN!
IF I WAS TO POCKET A FEW C-NOTES, WHO'D KNOW??
BUT SUDDENLY, THE MOBSTERS' JOY TURNS TO ANGUISH AS THE STOLEN MONEY CHANGES FORM BEFORE THEIR VERY EYES!!
HEY, BIG JOE, SHOULD I OPEN THIS SACK OF GREENBACKS AND...
YIIII!! IT..IT TURNED INTO A...A PIG!
MINE SPROUTED WINGS!...GULP! IT'S FLYING AWAY!
ONE MINUTE A PILE OF C-NOTES... AND NOW A MESS OF MUD!!
OKAY, WHO'S THE WISE-GUY?? WHO'S THE WISE GUY!
STEADY, YOU FOOLS! REMEMBER, HE'S GOT THE BRAINS OF AN INFANT! HE THINKS HE'S BEING FUNNY! PUT THOSE RODS AWAY AND LET ME HANDLE THIS!
I JUST THOUGHT OF A WAY TO TURN THIS INTO A BIGGER HAUL THAN WE EVEN EXPECTED!
LOOK, JUNIOR! SEE THIS LITTLE SPARKLER?? HOW'D YOU LIKE TO MAKE IT BIGGER FOR ME?? LOTS BIGGER!!
I'M REACHING HIM! HE UNDERSTANDS MY GESTURES! NOW WATCH!

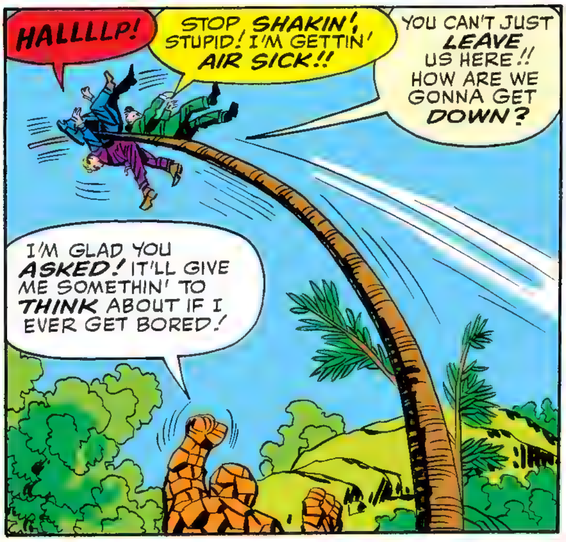

IT WORKED! LOOK AT THE SIZE OF THAT DIAMOND!! IT'LL BE WORTH MILLIONS!!
NOW WE GOTTA GET RID OF JUNIOR, BEFORE SOMEONE ELSE GRABS HIM!
HEY! MY HUNK OF ICE!! LOOK WHAT HAPPENED TO IT!! HE CHANGED IT AGAIN!!
GET YOUR GUNS OUT, BOYS! THIS ISN'T FUNNY!
LOOK, YOU... CHANGE THAT EGG BACK INTO A DIAMOND, OR IT'S CURTAINS FOR YA, SEE!?
BUT, AT THAT VERY SECOND...
IT'S LUCKY WE WERE ABLE TO FOLLOW THAT FLYING ARMORED TRUCK IN OUR FANTASTI-CAR!
HOW ABOUT LETTIN' US JOIN THE PARTY, GUYS? WE'RE A BARREL OF LAUGHS!
IT'S THE FANTASTIC FOUR... THREE OF 'EM, ANYWAY! DON'T JUST STAND THERE... GET 'EM!
KEEP 'EM FLYIN', BENJY BOY! I'M CUTTIN' OUT!
FLAME ON!
I CAN HANDLE THIS LITTLE CAPER BETTER UNDER MY OWN POWER!
HE'S ZIG-ZAGGIN' TOO FAST!! CAN'T GET A BEAD ON 'IM!
THE BULLETS THAT DO GET NEAR HIM JUST MELT AWAY BEFORE THEY CAN TOUCH 'IM! IT'S HOPELESS!
KEEP FIRING!! HE CAN'T KEEP HIS FLAME ON FOREVER!
DON'T KID YOURSELVES! MY FLAME'LL LAST LONG ENOUGH FOR ME TO PUT YOU CRUMBS OUT OF ACTION WITH A FEW FLAMING HOOPS!

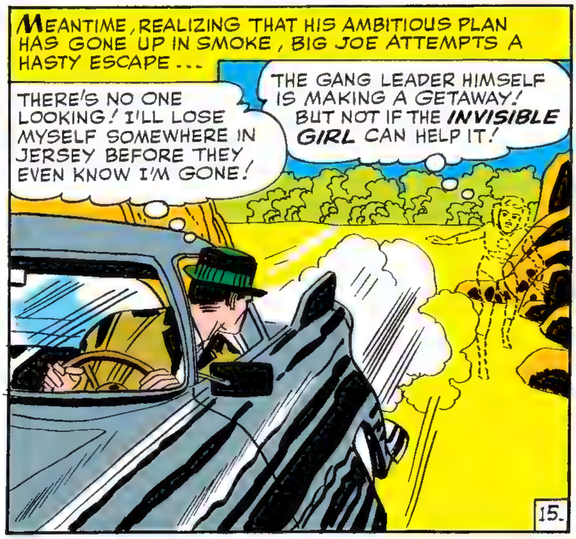

HEY, TORCHY BOY!! LEAVE SOME FOR OL' BENJAMIN, HUH?
IT'S THE **THING!** IF **HE** GRABS US WE'RE DONE FOR!
HERE'S A COUPLE FOR **YOU**, CUDDLES! DON'T SAY I NEVER **GAVE** YOU ANYTHING!

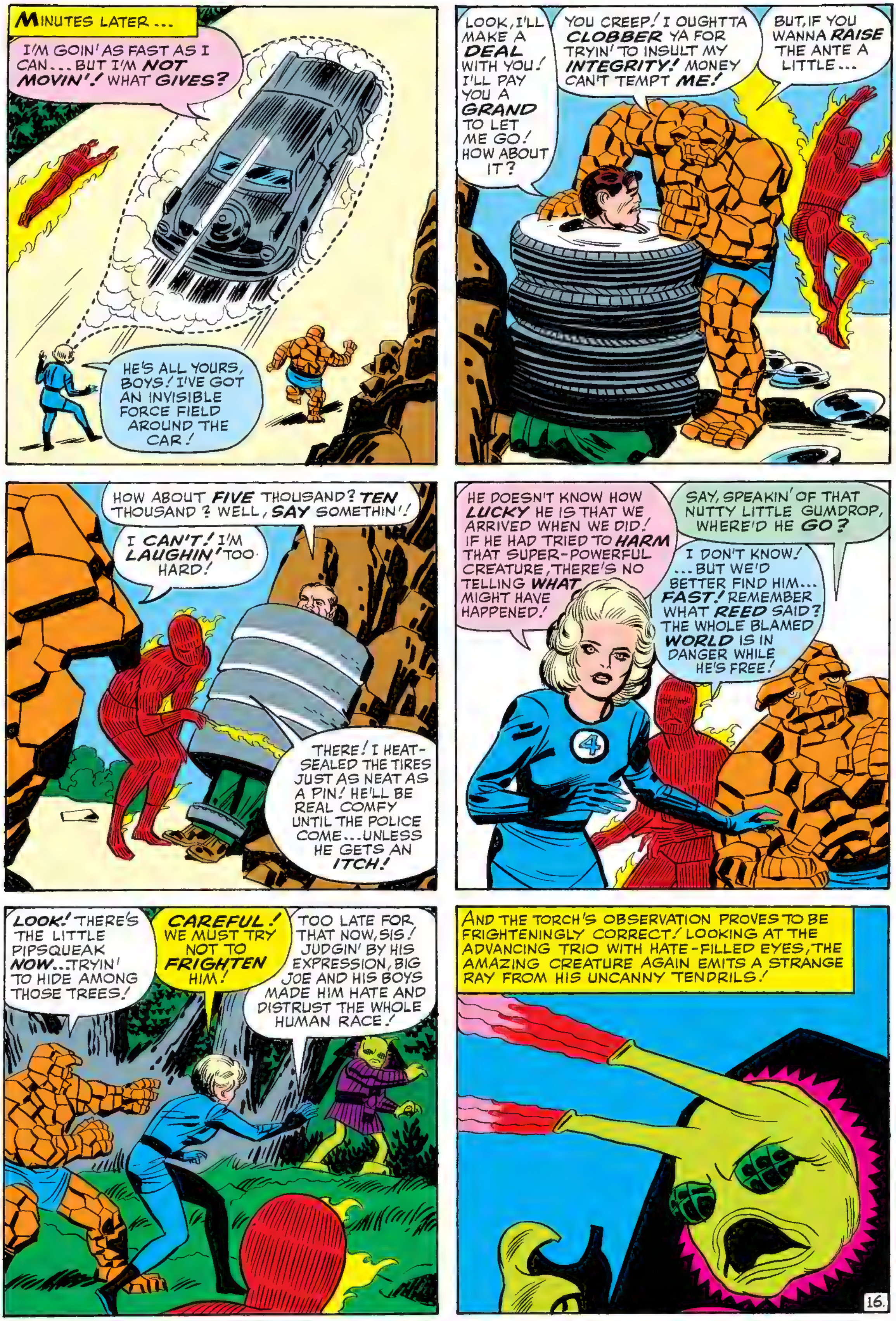

ARE YOU GUYS **KIDDIN'** WITH THOSE POPGUNS?? LET ME HAVE 'EM BEFORE YOU GET JUGGED FOR LITTERIN' THE PLACE WITH EMPTY SHELLS!

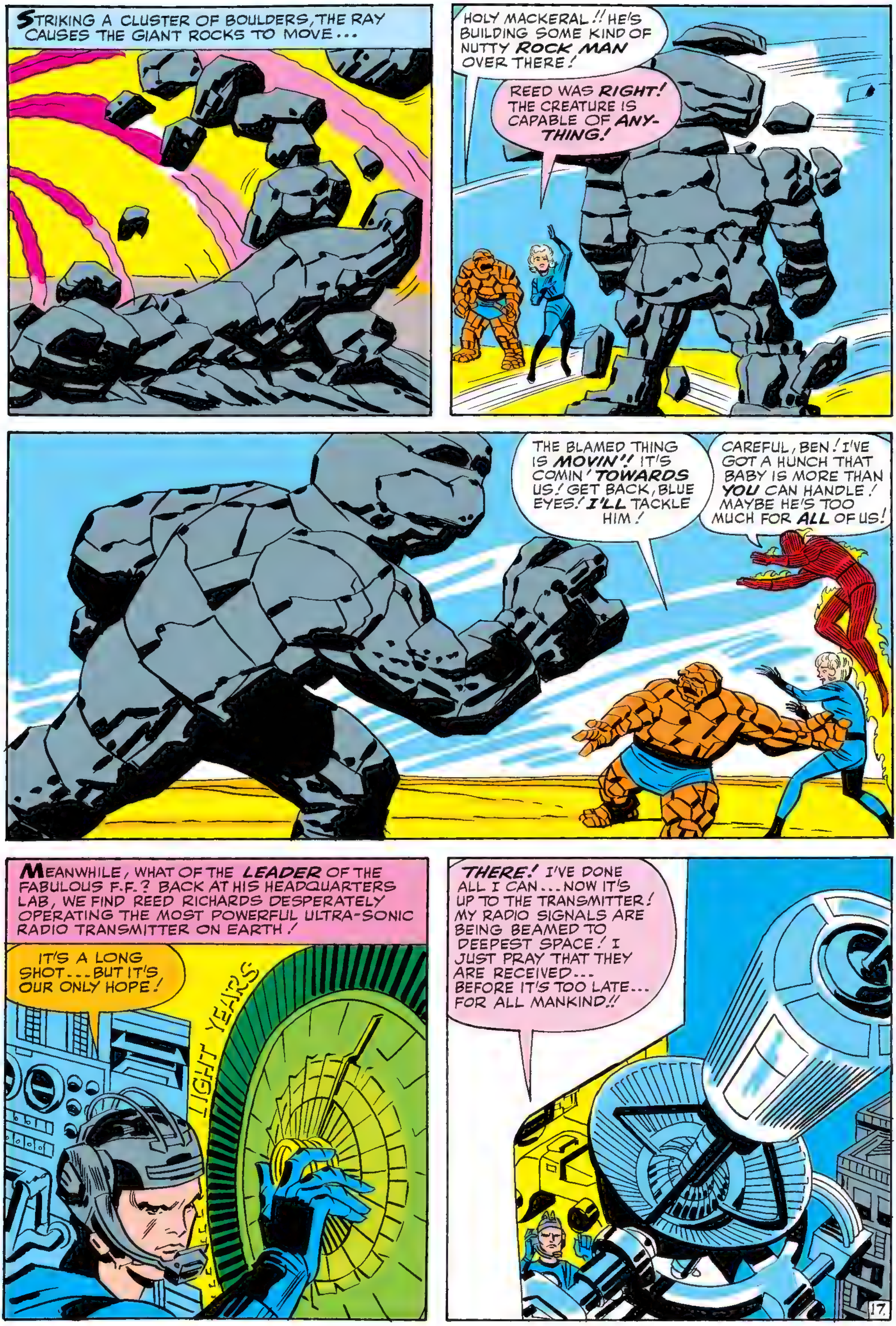

SO! YOU WON'T LET GO, HUH?? OKAY, LAUGHING BOY, THEN GO AHEAD AND SHOOT!! WHAT ARE YOU **WAITIN'** FOR? **SHOOT!!**
GULP! N-NO! ALL OF A SUDDEN I AIN'T MAD AT ANYBODY! **HONEST!**

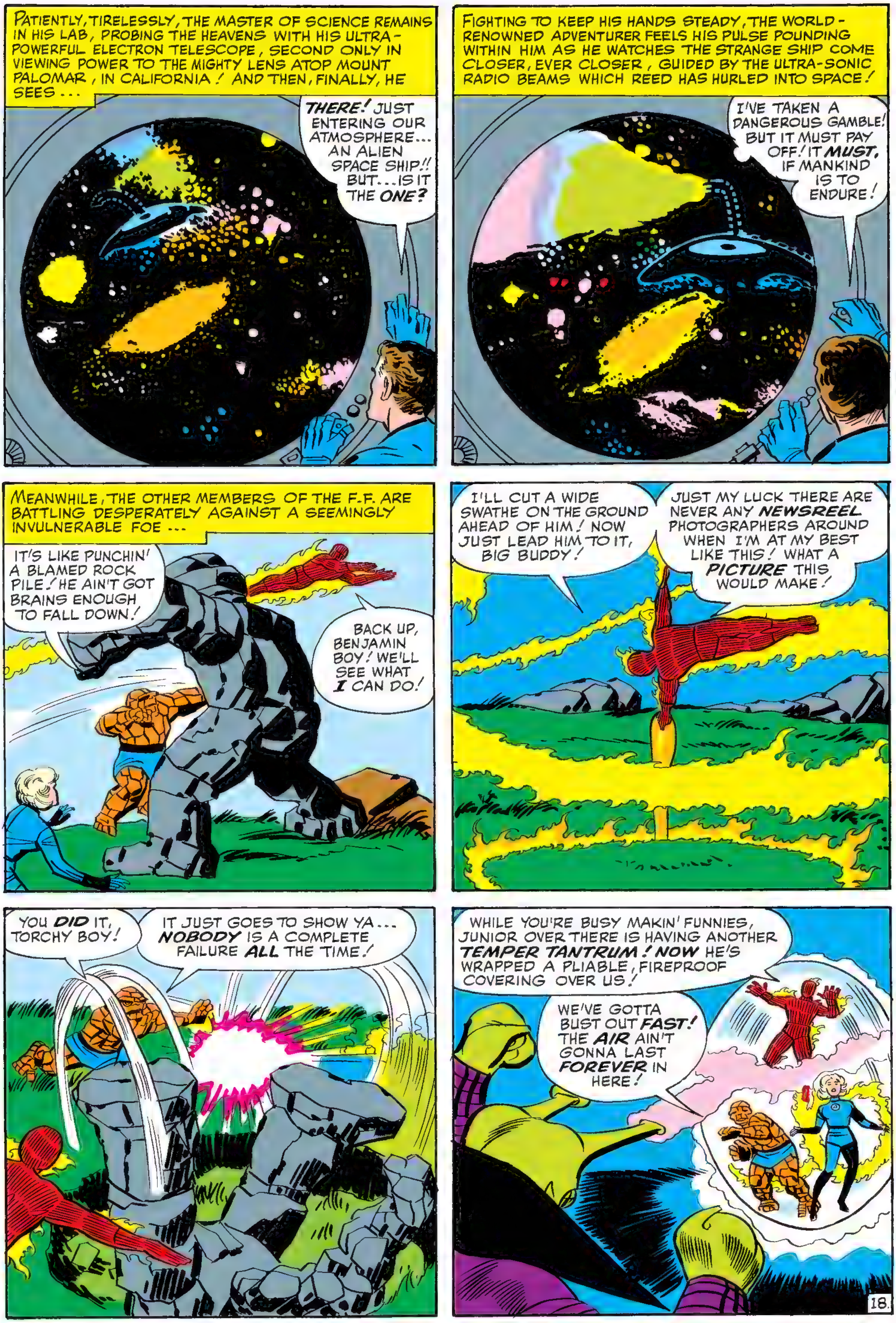

HEY, BEN, WRAP IT UP, WILLYA? FUN'S FUN, BUT WE'VE GOT **WORK** TO DO!
AW, QUIT POPPIN' YOUR JETS, JUNIOR! I JUST WANNA PUT THESE PUNKS ON ICE FOR A WHILE, IN MY OWN INIMITABLE WAY!
ALL I GOTTA DO IS PUT THE END OF THIS SAPLING THROUGH A FEW BELT LOOPS, AND THEN WAIT FOR MY APPLAUSE!

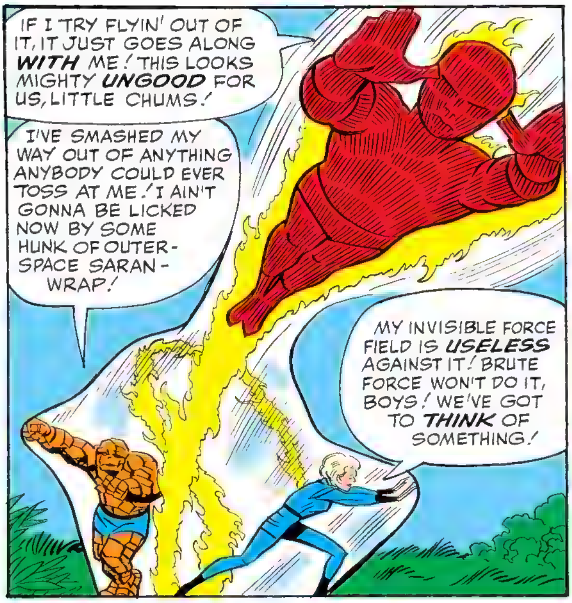

HALLLLP!
STOP **SHAKIN'**, STUPID! I'M GETTIN' **AIR SICK!!**
YOU CAN'T JUST **LEAVE** US HERE!! HOW ARE WE GONNA GET **DOWN?**
I'M GLAD YOU **ASKED!** IT'LL GIVE ME SOMETHIN' TO **THINK** ABOUT IF I EVER GET BORED!

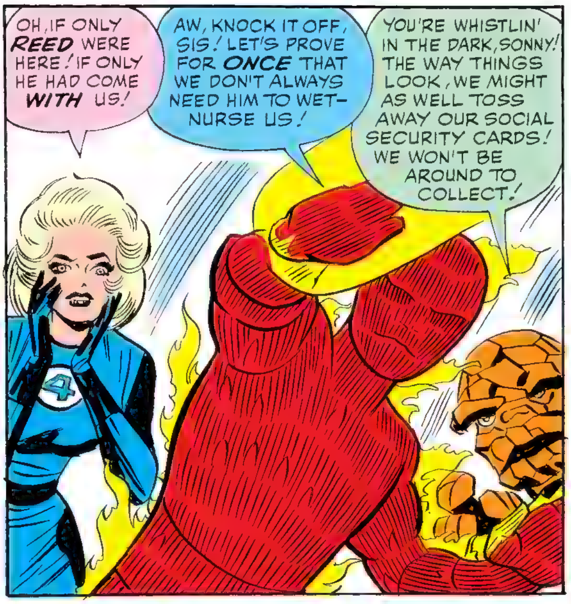

MEANTIME, REALIZING THAT HIS AMBITIOUS PLAN HAS GONE UP IN SMOKE, BIG JOE ATTEMPTS A HASTY ESCAPE...
THERE'S NO ONE LOOKING! I'LL LOSE MYSELF SOMEWHERE IN JERSEY BEFORE THEY EVEN KNOW I'M GONE!
THE GANG LEADER HIMSELF IS MAKING A GETAWAY! BUT NOT IF THE **INVISIBLE GIRL** CAN HELP IT!


MINUTES LATER ...
I'M GOIN' AS FAST AS I CAN... BUT I'M **NOT MOVIN'!** WHAT **GIVES?**
HE'S ALL YOURS, BOYS! I'VE GOT AN INVISIBLE FORCE FIELD AROUND THE CAR!
LOOK, I'LL MAKE A **DEAL** WITH YOU! I'LL PAY YOU A **GRAND** TO LET ME GO! HOW ABOUT IT?
YOU CREEP! I OUGHTTA **CLOBBER** YA FOR TRYIN' TO INSULT MY **INTEGRITY!** MONEY CAN'T TEMPT **ME!**
BUT, IF YOU WANNA **RAISE** THE ANTE A LITTLE...
HOW ABOUT **FIVE** THOUSAND? **TEN** THOUSAND? WELL, **SAY** SOMETHIN'!
I **CAN'T!** I'M **LAUGHIN'** TOO HARD!
THERE! I HEAT-SEALED THE TIRES JUST AS NEAT AS A PIN! HE'LL BE REAL COMFY UNTIL THE POLICE COME... UNLESS HE GETS AN **ITCH!**
HE DOESN'T KNOW HOW **LUCKY** HE IS THAT WE ARRIVED WHEN WE DID! IF HE HAD TRIED TO **HARM** THAT SUPER-POWERFUL CREATURE, THERE'S NO TELLING **WHAT** MIGHT HAVE HAPPENED!
SAY, SPEAKIN' OF THAT NUTTY LITTLE GUMDROP, WHERE'D HE **GO?**
I DON'T KNOW! ...BUT WE'D BETTER FIND HIM... **FAST!** REMEMBER WHAT **REED** SAID? THE WHOLE BLAMED **WORLD** IS IN DANGER WHILE HE'S FREE!
4
LOOK! THERE'S THE LITTLE PIPSQUEAK **NOW**... TRYIN' TO HIDE AMONG THOSE TREES!
CAREFUL! WE MUST TRY NOT TO **FRIGHTEN** HIM!
TOO LATE FOR THAT NOW, SIS! JUDGIN' BY HIS EXPRESSION, BIG JOE AND HIS BOYS MADE HIM HATE AND DISTRUST THE WHOLE HUMAN RACE!
AND THE TORCH'S OBSERVATION PROVES TO BE FRIGHTENINGLY CORRECT! LOOKING AT THE ADVANCING TRIO WITH HATE-FILLED EYES, THE AMAZING CREATURE AGAIN EMITS A STRANGE RAY FROM HIS UNCANNY TENDRILS!


STRIKING A CLUSTER OF BOULDERS, THE RAY CAUSES THE GIANT ROCKS TO MOVE...
HOLY MACKERAL!! HE'S BUILDING SOME KIND OF NUTTY **ROCK MAN** OVER THERE!
REED WAS **RIGHT!** THE CREATURE IS CAPABLE OF **ANYTHING!**
THE BLAMED THING IS **MOVIN'!** IT'S COMIN' **TOWARDS** US! GET BACK, BLUE EYES! **I'LL** TACKLE HIM!
CAREFUL, BEN! I'VE GOT A HUNCH THAT BABY IS MORE THAN **YOU** CAN HANDLE! MAYBE HE'S TOO MUCH FOR **ALL** OF US!
MEANWHILE, WHAT OF THE **LEADER** OF THE FABULOUS F.F.? BACK AT HIS HEADQUARTERS LAB, WE FIND REED RICHARDS DESPERATELY OPERATING THE MOST POWERFUL ULTRA-SONIC RADIO TRANSMITTER ON EARTH!
IT'S A LONG SHOT... BUT IT'S OUR ONLY HOPE!
LIGHT YEARS
THERE! I'VE DONE ALL I CAN... NOW IT'S UP TO THE TRANSMITTER! MY RADIO SIGNALS ARE BEING BEAMED TO DEEPEST SPACE! I JUST PRAY THAT THEY ARE RECEIVED... BEFORE IT'S TOO LATE... FOR ALL MANKIND!!


PATIENTLY, TIRELESSLY, THE MASTER OF SCIENCE REMAINS IN HIS LAB, PROBING THE HEAVENS WITH HIS ULTRA-POWERFUL ELECTRON TELESCOPE, SECOND ONLY IN VIEWING POWER TO THE MIGHTY LENS ATOP MOUNT PALOMAR, IN CALIFORNIA! AND THEN, FINALLY, HE SEES...
THERE! JUST ENTERING OUR ATMOSPHERE... AN ALIEN SPACE SHIP!! BUT...IS IT THE ONE?
FIGHTING TO KEEP HIS HANDS STEADY, THE WORLD-RENOWNED ADVENTURER FEELS HIS PULSE POUNDING WITHIN HIM AS HE WATCHES THE STRANGE SHIP COME CLOSER, EVER CLOSER, GUIDED BY THE ULTRA-SONIC RADIO BEAMS WHICH REED HAS HURLED INTO SPACE!
I'VE TAKEN A DANGEROUS GAMBLE! BUT IT MUST PAY OFF! IT MUST, IF MANKIND IS TO ENDURE!
MEANWHILE, THE OTHER MEMBERS OF THE F.F. ARE BATTLING DESPERATELY AGAINST A SEEMINGLY INVULNERABLE FOE...
IT'S LIKE PUNCHIN' A BLAMED ROCK PILE! HE AIN'T GOT BRAINS ENOUGH TO FALL DOWN!
BACK UP, BENJAMIN BOY! WE'LL SEE WHAT I CAN DO!
I'LL CUT A WIDE SWATHE ON THE GROUND AHEAD OF HIM! NOW JUST LEAD HIM TO IT, BIG BUDDY!
JUST MY LUCK THERE ARE NEVER ANY NEWSREEL PHOTOGRAPHERS AROUND WHEN I'M AT MY BEST LIKE THIS! WHAT A PICTURE THIS WOULD MAKE!
YOU DID IT, TORCHY BOY!
IT JUST GOES TO SHOW YA... NOBODY IS A COMPLETE FAILURE ALL THE TIME!
WHILE YOU'RE BUSY MAKIN' FUNNIES, JUNIOR OVER THERE IS HAVING ANOTHER TEMPER TANTRUM! NOW HE'S WRAPPED A PLIABLE, FIREPROOF COVERING OVER US!
WE'VE GOTTA BUST OUT FAST! THE AIR AIN'T GONNA LAST FOREVER IN HERE!


IF I TRY FLYIN' OUT OF IT, IT JUST GOES ALONG **WITH** ME! THIS LOOKS MIGHTY **UNGOOD** FOR US, LITTLE CHUMS!
I'VE SMASHED MY WAY OUT OF ANYTHING ANYBODY COULD EVER TOSS AT ME! I AIN'T GONNA BE LICKED NOW BY SOME HUNK OF OUTER-SPACE SARAN-WRAP!
MY INVISIBLE FORCE FIELD IS **USELESS** AGAINST IT! BRUTE FORCE WON'T DO IT, BOYS! WE'VE GOT TO **THINK** OF SOMETHING!


OH, IF ONLY **REED** WERE HERE! IF ONLY HE HAD COME **WITH** US!
AW, KNOCK IT OFF, SIS! LET'S PROVE FOR **ONCE** THAT WE DON'T ALWAYS NEED HIM TO WET-NURSE US!
YOU'RE WHISTLIN' IN THE DARK, SONNY! THE WAY THINGS LOOK, WE MIGHT AS WELL TOSS AWAY OUR SOCIAL SECURITY CARDS! WE WON'T BE AROUND TO COLLECT!
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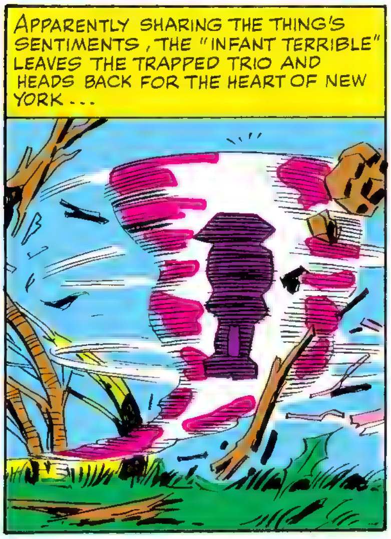
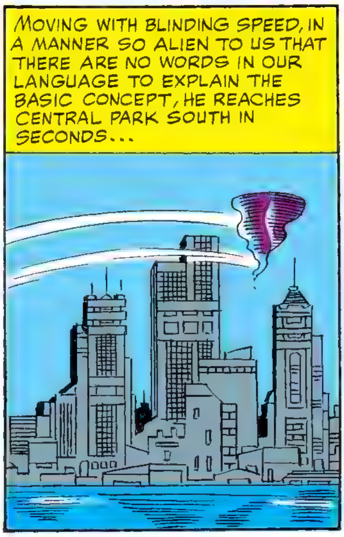
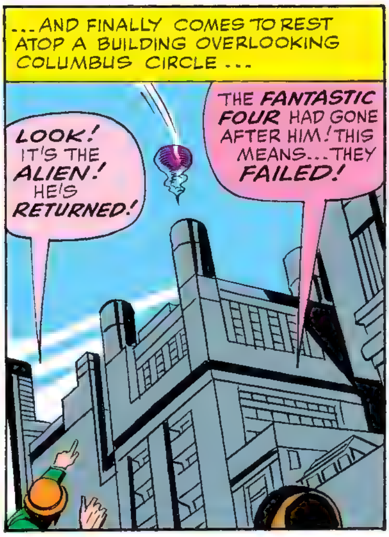
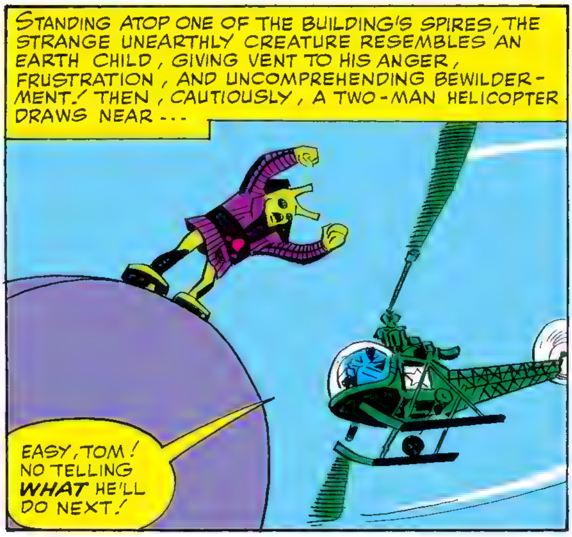
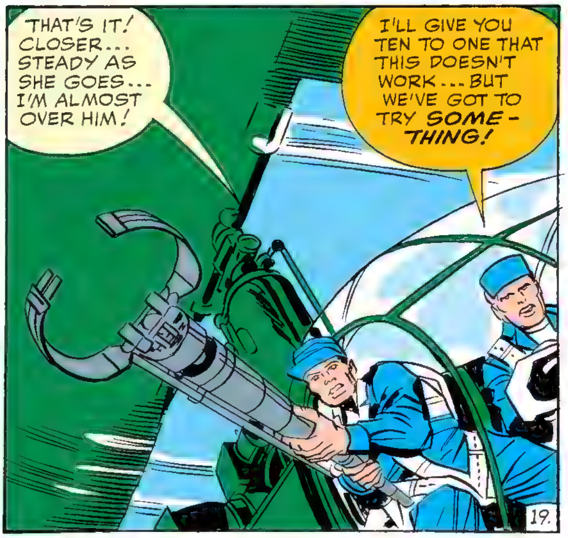

APPARENTLY SHARING THE THING'S SENTIMENTS, THE "INFANT TERRIBLE" LEAVES THE TRAPPED TRIO AND HEADS BACK FOR THE HEART OF NEW YORK...

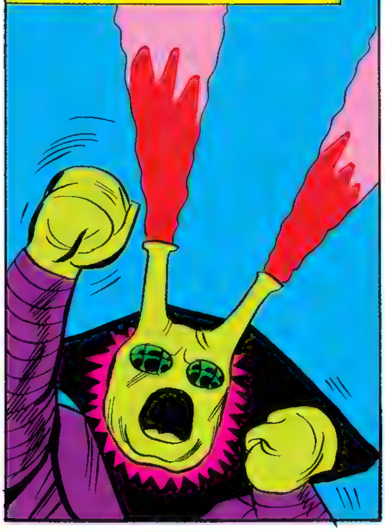

MOVING WITH BLINDING SPEED, IN A MANNER SO ALIEN TO US THAT THERE ARE NO WORDS IN OUR LANGUAGE TO EXPLAIN THE BASIC CONCEPT, HE REACHES CENTRAL PARK SOUTH IN SECONDS...


...AND FINALLY COMES TO REST ATOP A BUILDING OVERLOOKING COLUMBUS CIRCLE...
LOOK! IT'S THE **ALIEN!** HE'S **RETURNED!**
THE **FANTASTIC FOUR** HAD GONE AFTER HIM! THIS MEANS... THEY **FAILED!**

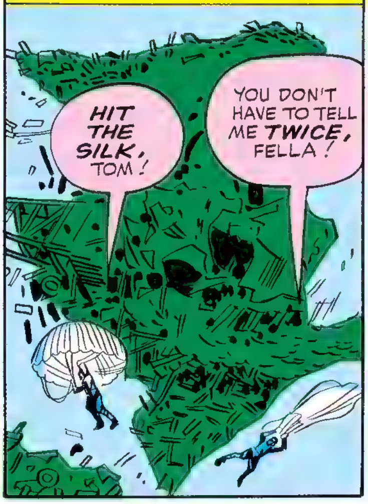

STANDING ATOP ONE OF THE BUILDING'S SPIRES, THE STRANGE UNEARTHLY CREATURE RESEMBLES AN EARTH CHILD, GIVING VENT TO HIS ANGER, FRUSTRATION, AND UNCOMPREHENDING BEWILDERMENT! THEN, CAUTIOUSLY, A TWO-MAN HELICOPTER DRAWS NEAR...
EASY, TOM! NO TELLING **WHAT** HE'LL DO NEXT!


THAT'S IT! CLOSER... STEADY AS SHE GOES... I'M ALMOST OVER HIM!
I'LL GIVE YOU TEN TO ONE THAT THIS DOESN'T WORK... BUT WE'VE GOT TO TRY **SOMETHING!**

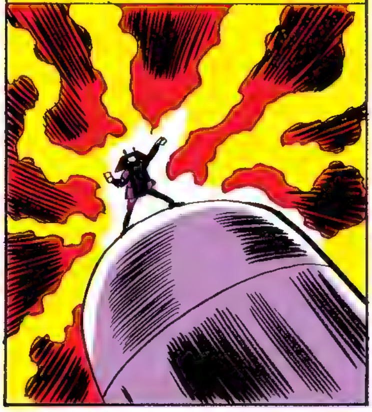
AT THAT CRUCIAL MOMENT, THE INTENDED TARGET **SEES** HIS ATTACKERS AND . . .



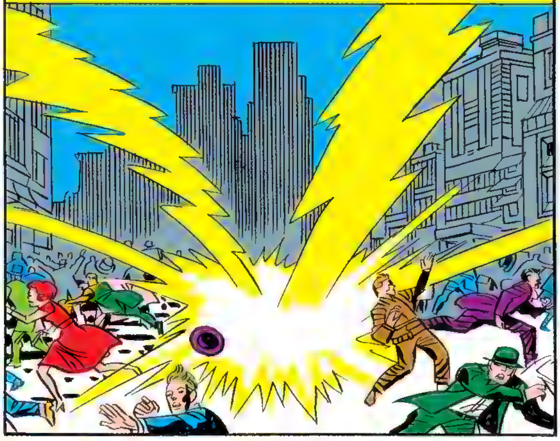
NO SOONER IS THE WHIRLEYBIRD TOUCHED BY THE UNCANNY RAYS, THAN IT SEEMS TO TURN TO ASHES AND DISSOLVE INTO THIN AIR!!


HIT THE SILK, TOM!
YOU DON'T HAVE TO TELL ME TWICE, FELLA!

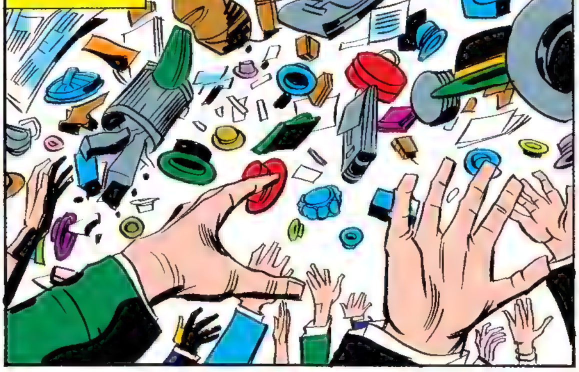
WHILE ATOP THE BUILDING, THE MYSTERIOUS ALIEN FEELS THAT HE IS SURROUNDED BY ENEMIES . . . MENACED ON ALL SIDES BY THOSE WHO WOULD ATTACK HIM, EXPLOIT HIM, DESTROY HIM! UNABLE TO UNDERSTAND, UNABLE TO COMMUNICATE, HE GIVES WAY TO A FIT OF UNCONTROLLABLE RAGE!



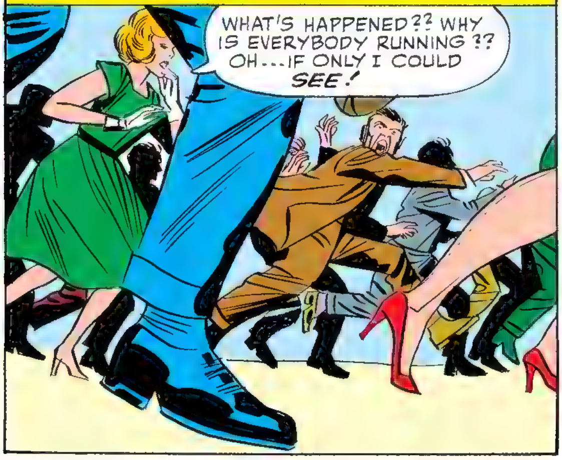
BOLT AFTER BOLT OF SHEER, IRRESISTIBLE ENERGY IS HURLED INTO THE STREET BELOW, MIRACULOUSLY MISSING THE PANIC-STRICKEN PEDESTRIANS WHO DESPERATELY FLEE FOR COVER!



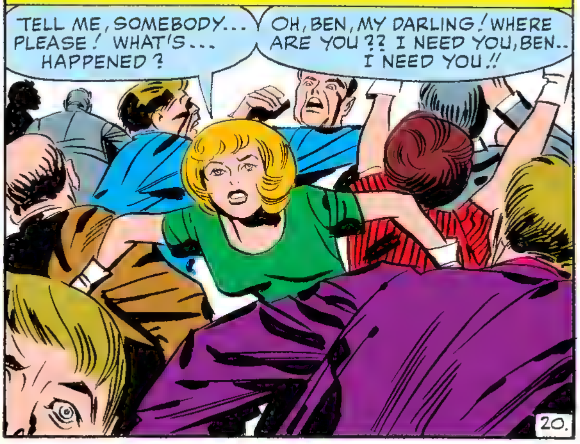
HAVING NO KNOWLEDGE, NO UNDERSTANDING OF THE HUMAN RACE, THE LONE ALIEN FEELS THAT ANYTHING THE CREATURES BELOW HIM ARE CARRYING MIGHT BE WEAPONS! AND SO, WITH NO MORE EFFORT THAN THE WINK OF AN EYE, HE CAUSES PACKAGES, PARCELS, HANDBAGS, HATS . . . EVERYTHING HE SEES, TO RISE INTO THE AIR . . . OUT OF REACH OF THE THUNDERSTRUCK HUMANS BELOW . . .

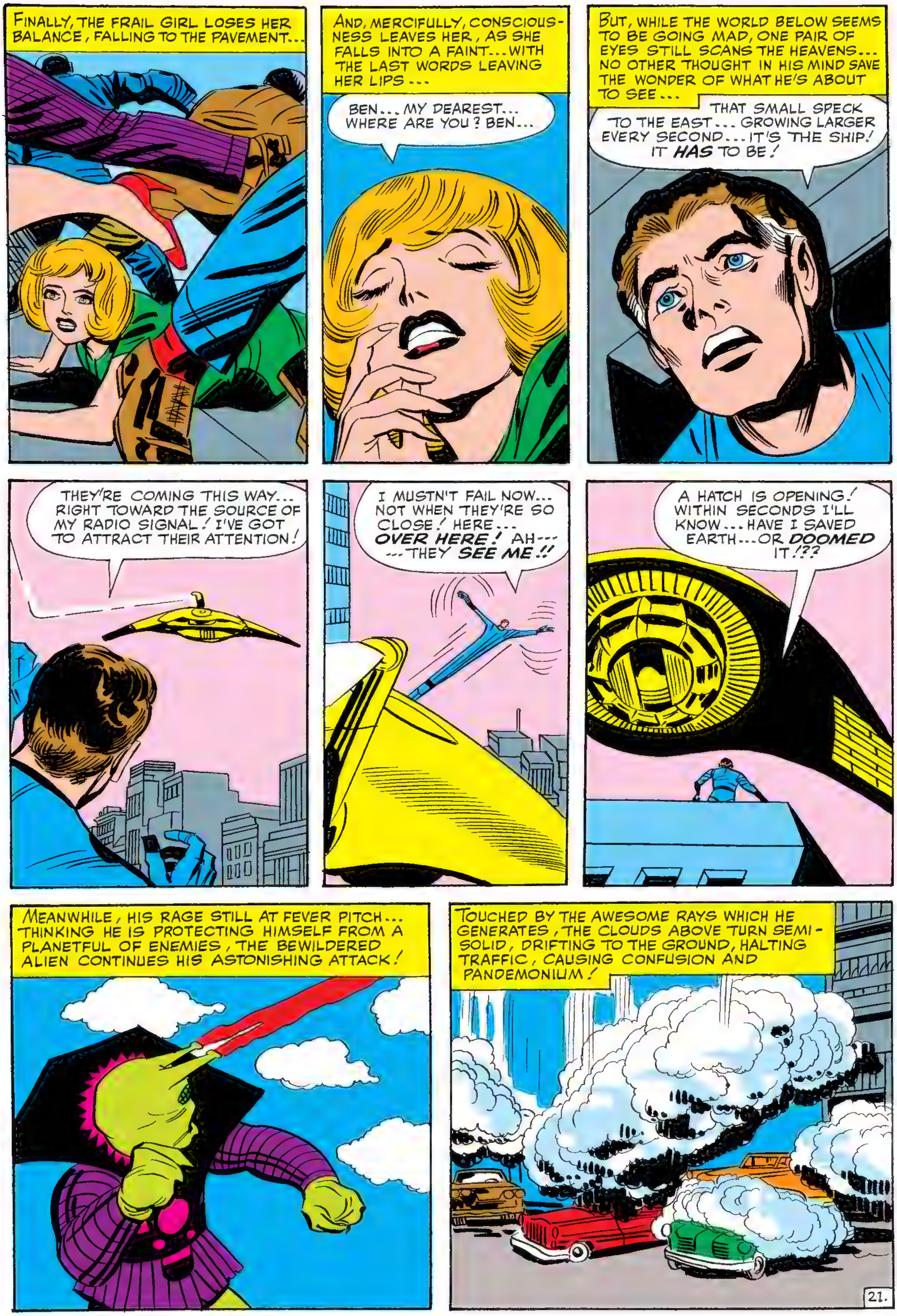


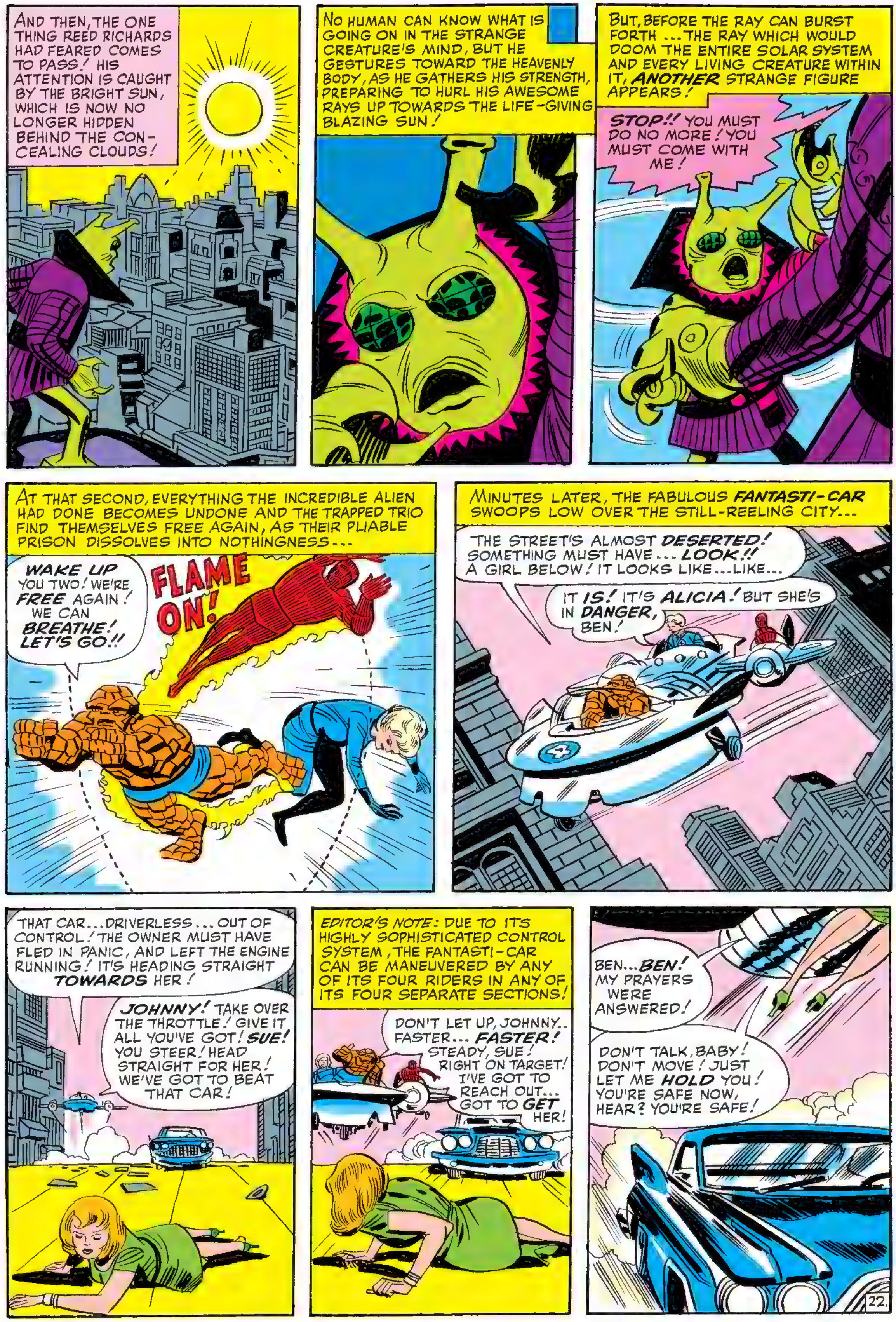
AND, AS THE CROWD CONTINUES TO FLEE IN MAD CONFUSION, ONE LONE GIRL FINDS HERSELF HOPELESSLY TRAPPED IN THE MELEE . . .

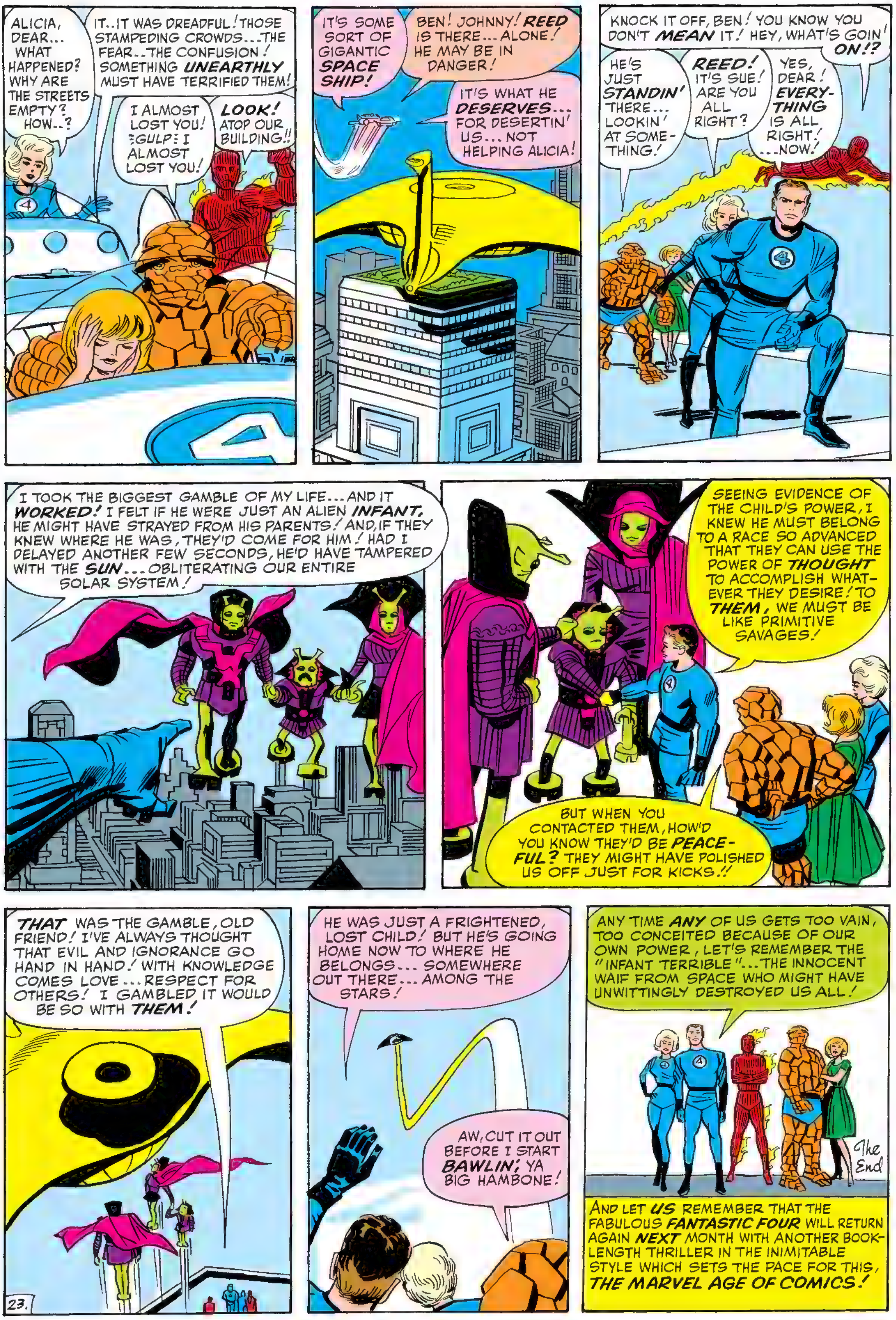

WHAT'S HAPPENED?? WHY IS EVERYBODY RUNNING?? OH . . . IF ONLY I COULD SEE!

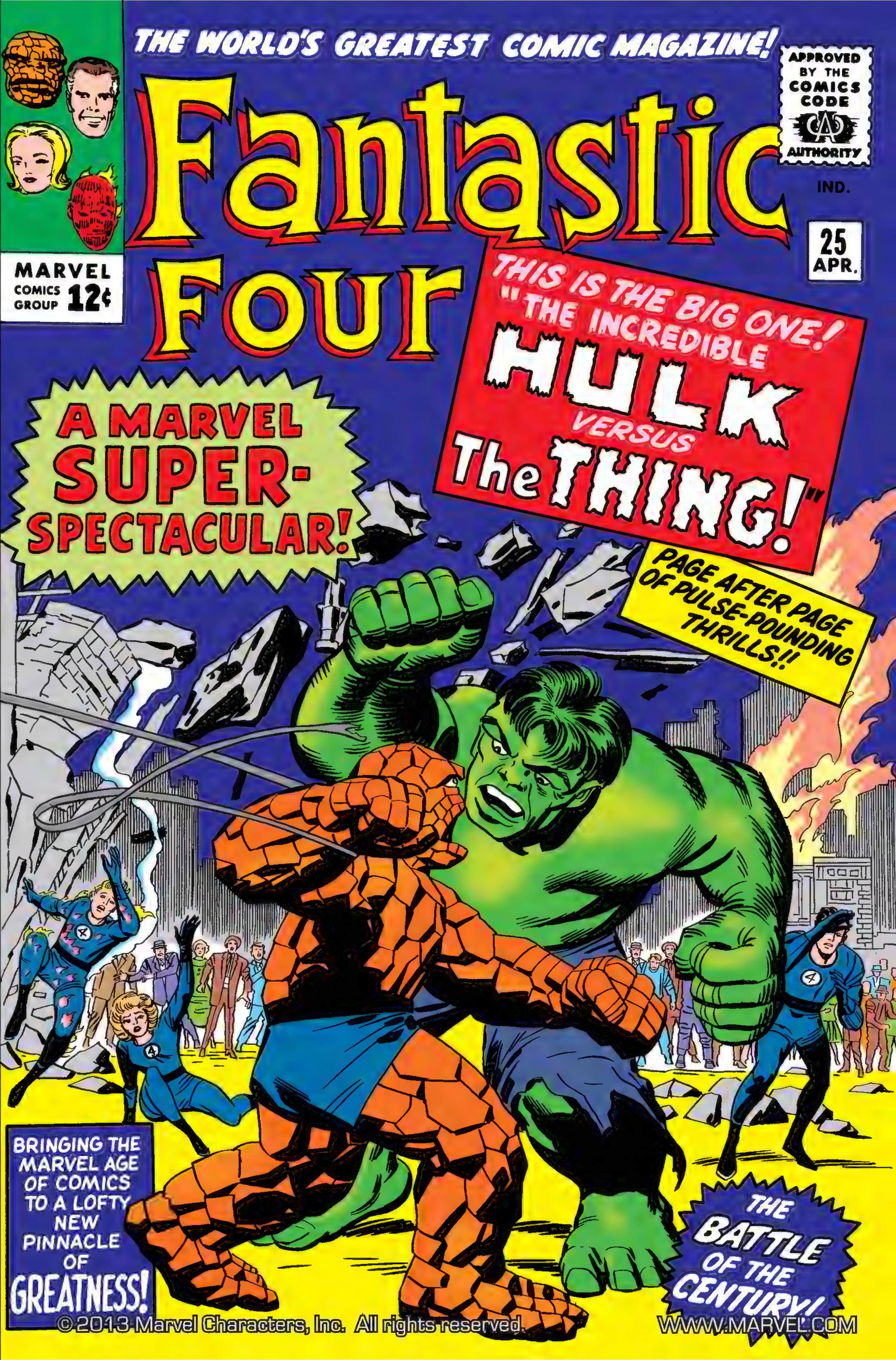
IT'S THE BLIND ALICIA, WHO HAD BEEN ON HER WAY TO THE F.F. HEADQUARTERS TO VISIT THE ONE SHE LOVES! BUT IN THEIR FEAR AND MINDLESS PANIC, NONE TAKE NOTICE OF THE HELPLESS, UNSEEING GIRL!


TELL ME, SOMEBODY . . . PLEASE! WHAT'S . . . HAPPENED?
OH, BEN, MY DARLING! WHERE ARE YOU?? I NEED YOU, BEN . . I NEED YOU!!


FINALLY, THE FRAIL GIRL LOSES HER BALANCE, FALLING TO THE PAVEMENT...
AND, MERCIFULLY, CONSCIOUSNESS LEAVES HER, AS SHE FALLS INTO A FAINT...WITH THE LAST WORDS LEAVING HER LIPS...
BEN... MY DEAREST... WHERE ARE YOU? BEN...
BUT, WHILE THE WORLD BELOW SEEMS TO BE GOING MAD, ONE PAIR OF EYES STILL SCANS THE HEAVENS... NO OTHER THOUGHT IN HIS MIND SAVE THE WONDER OF WHAT HE'S ABOUT TO SEE...
THAT SMALL SPECK TO THE EAST... GROWING LARGER EVERY SECOND... IT'S THE SHIP! IT **HAS** TO BE!
THEY'RE COMING THIS WAY... RIGHT TOWARD THE SOURCE OF MY RADIO SIGNAL! I'VE GOT TO ATTRACT THEIR ATTENTION!
I MUSTN'T FAIL NOW... NOT WHEN THEY'RE SO CLOSE! HERE... **OVER HERE!** AH--- ---THEY **SEE ME!!**
A HATCH IS OPENING! WITHIN SECONDS I'LL KNOW... HAVE I SAVED EARTH... OR **DOOMED** IT!??
MEANWHILE, HIS RAGE STILL AT FEVER PITCH... THINKING HE IS PROTECTING HIMSELF FROM A PLANETFUL OF ENEMIES, THE BEWILDERED ALIEN CONTINUES HIS ASTONISHING ATTACK!
TOUCHED BY THE AWESOME RAYS WHICH HE GENERATES, THE CLOUDS ABOVE TURN SEMI-SOLID, DRIFTING TO THE GROUND, HALTING TRAFFIC, CAUSING CONFUSION AND PANDEMONIUM!


AND THEN, THE ONE THING REED RICHARDS HAD FEARED COMES TO PASS! HIS ATTENTION IS CAUGHT BY THE BRIGHT SUN, WHICH IS NOW NO LONGER HIDDEN BEHIND THE CONCEALING CLOUDS!
NO HUMAN CAN KNOW WHAT IS GOING ON IN THE STRANGE CREATURE'S MIND, BUT HE GESTURES TOWARD THE HEAVENLY BODY, AS HE GATHERS HIS STRENGTH, PREPARING TO HURL HIS AWESOME RAYS UP TOWARDS THE LIFE-GIVING BLAZING SUN!
BUT, BEFORE THE RAY CAN BURST FORTH ... THE RAY WHICH WOULD DOOM THE ENTIRE SOLAR SYSTEM AND EVERY LIVING CREATURE WITHIN IT, **ANOTHER** STRANGE FIGURE APPEARS!
STOP!! YOU MUST DO NO MORE! YOU MUST COME WITH ME!
AT THAT SECOND, EVERYTHING THE INCREDIBLE ALIEN HAD DONE BECOMES UNDONE AND THE TRAPPED TRIO FIND THEMSELVES FREE AGAIN, AS THEIR PLIABLE PRISON DISSOLVES INTO NOTHINGNESS...
WAKE UP YOU TWO! WE'RE **FREE** AGAIN! WE CAN **BREATHE! LET'S GO!!**
FLAME ON!
MINUTES LATER, THE FABULOUS **FANTASTI-CAR** SWOOPS LOW OVER THE STILL-REELING CITY...
THE STREET'S ALMOST **DESERTED!** SOMETHING MUST HAVE... **LOOK!!** A GIRL BELOW! IT LOOKS LIKE...LIKE...
IT **IS!** IT'S **ALICIA!** BUT SHE'S IN **DANGER,** BEN!
THAT CAR...DRIVERLESS... OUT OF CONTROL! THE OWNER MUST HAVE FLED IN PANIC, AND LEFT THE ENGINE RUNNING! IT'S HEADING STRAIGHT **TOWARDS** HER!
JOHNNY! TAKE OVER THE THROTTLE! GIVE IT ALL YOU'VE GOT! **SUE!** YOU STEER! HEAD STRAIGHT FOR HER! WE'VE GOT TO BEAT THAT CAR!
EDITOR'S NOTE: DUE TO ITS HIGHLY SOPHISTICATED CONTROL SYSTEM, THE FANTASTI-CAR CAN BE MANEUVERED BY ANY OF ITS FOUR RIDERS IN ANY OF ITS FOUR SEPARATE SECTIONS!
DON'T LET UP, JOHNNY.. FASTER... **FASTER!**
STEADY, SUE! RIGHT ON TARGET! I'VE GOT TO REACH OUT... GOT TO **GET** HER!
BEN... **BEN!** MY PRAYERS WERE ANSWERED!
DON'T TALK, BABY! DON'T MOVE! JUST LET ME **HOLD** YOU! YOU'RE SAFE NOW, HEAR? YOU'RE SAFE!


ALICIA, DEAR... WHAT HAPPENED? WHY ARE THE STREETS EMPTY? HOW..?
IT..IT WAS DREADFUL! THOSE STAMPEDING CROWDS... THE FEAR..THE CONFUSION! SOMETHING UNEARTHLY MUST HAVE TERRIFIED THEM!
I ALMOST LOST YOU! GULP! I ALMOST LOST YOU!
LOOK! ATOP OUR BUILDING!!
IT'S SOME SORT OF GIGANTIC SPACE SHIP!
BEN! JOHNNY! REED IS THERE... ALONE! HE MAY BE IN DANGER!
IT'S WHAT HE DESERVES... FOR DESERTIN' US... NOT HELPING ALICIA!
KNOCK IT OFF, BEN! YOU KNOW YOU DON'T MEAN IT! HEY, WHAT'S GOIN' ON!?
HE'S JUST STANDIN' THERE... LOOKIN' AT SOME-THING!
REED! IT'S SUE! ARE YOU ALL RIGHT?
YES, DEAR! EVERY-THING IS ALL RIGHT! ...NOW!
I TOOK THE BIGGEST GAMBLE OF MY LIFE... AND IT WORKED! I FELT IF HE WERE JUST AN ALIEN INFANT, HE MIGHT HAVE STRAYED FROM HIS PARENTS! AND, IF THEY KNEW WHERE HE WAS, THEY'D COME FOR HIM! HAD I DELAYED ANOTHER FEW SECONDS, HE'D HAVE TAMPERED WITH THE SUN... OBLITERATING OUR ENTIRE SOLAR SYSTEM!
SEEING EVIDENCE OF THE CHILD'S POWER, I KNEW HE MUST BELONG TO A RACE SO ADVANCED THAT THEY CAN USE THE POWER OF THOUGHT TO ACCOMPLISH WHAT-EVER THEY DESIRE! TO THEM, WE MUST BE LIKE PRIMITIVE SAVAGES!
BUT WHEN YOU CONTACTED THEM, HOW'D YOU KNOW THEY'D BE PEACE-FUL? THEY MIGHT HAVE POLISHED US OFF JUST FOR KICKS!!
THAT WAS THE GAMBLE, OLD FRIEND! I'VE ALWAYS THOUGHT THAT EVIL AND IGNORANCE GO HAND IN HAND! WITH KNOWLEDGE COMES LOVE... RESPECT FOR OTHERS! I GAMBLED IT WOULD BE SO WITH THEM!
HE WAS JUST A FRIGHTENED, LOST CHILD! BUT HE'S GOING HOME NOW TO WHERE HE BELONGS... SOMEWHERE OUT THERE... AMONG THE STARS!
AW, CUT IT OUT BEFORE I START BAWLIN', YA BIG HAMBONE!
ANY TIME ANY OF US GETS TOO VAIN, TOO CONCEITED BECAUSE OF OUR OWN POWER, LET'S REMEMBER THE "INFANT TERRIBLE"... THE INNOCENT WAIF FROM SPACE WHO MIGHT HAVE UNWITTINGLY DESTROYED US ALL!
The End
AND LET US REMEMBER THAT THE FABULOUS FANTASTIC FOUR WILL RETURN AGAIN NEXT MONTH WITH ANOTHER BOOK-LENGTH THRILLER IN THE INIMITABLE STYLE WHICH SETS THE PACE FOR THIS, THE MARVEL AGE OF COMICS!


THE WORLD'S GREATEST COMIC MAGAZINE!
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
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Fantastic Four
MARVEL COMICS GROUP 12¢
25 APR.
THIS IS THE BIG ONE! "THE INCREDIBLE HULK VERSUS The THING!"
A MARVEL SUPER-SPECTACULAR!
PAGE AFTER PAGE OF PULSE-POUNDING THRILLS!!
BRINGING THE MARVEL AGE OF COMICS TO A LOFTY NEW PINNACLE OF GREATNESS!
THE BATTLE OF THE CENTURY!

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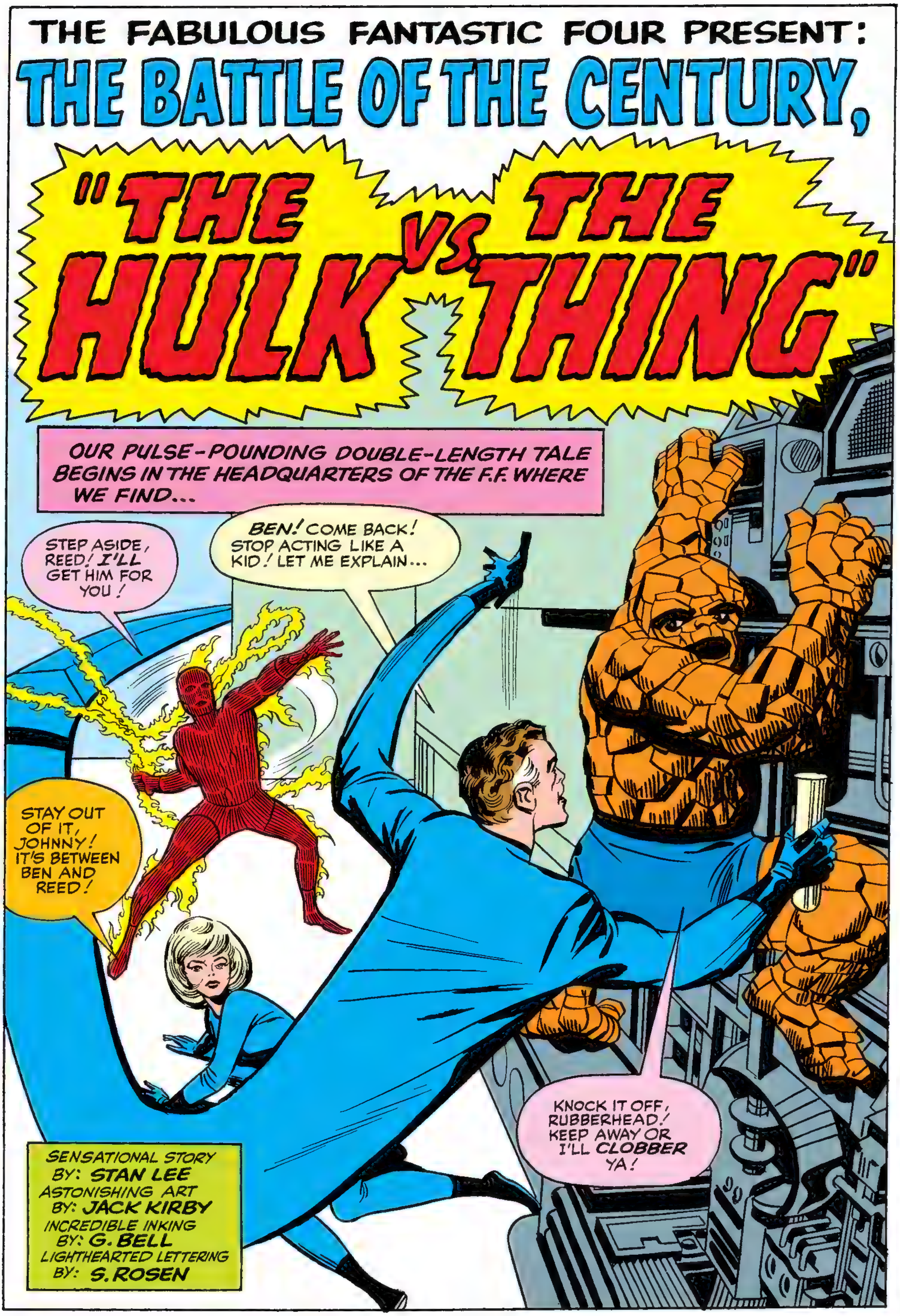
THE FABULOUS FANTASTIC FOUR PRESENT:
THE BATTLE OF THE CENTURY,
"THE HULK VS. THE THING"
OUR PULSE-POUNDING DOUBLE-LENGTH TALE BEGINS IN THE HEADQUARTERS OF THE F.F. WHERE WE FIND...
STEP ASIDE, REED! I'LL GET HIM FOR YOU!
BEN! COME BACK! STOP ACTING LIKE A KID! LET ME EXPLAIN...
STAY OUT OF IT, JOHNNY! IT'S BETWEEN BEN AND REED!
KNOCK IT OFF, RUBBERHEAD! KEEP AWAY OR I'LL CLOBBER YA!
SENSATIONAL STORY BY: STAN LEE
ASTONISHING ART BY: JACK KIRBY
INCREDIBLE INKING BY: G. BELL
LIGHTHEARTED LETTERING BY: S. ROSEN

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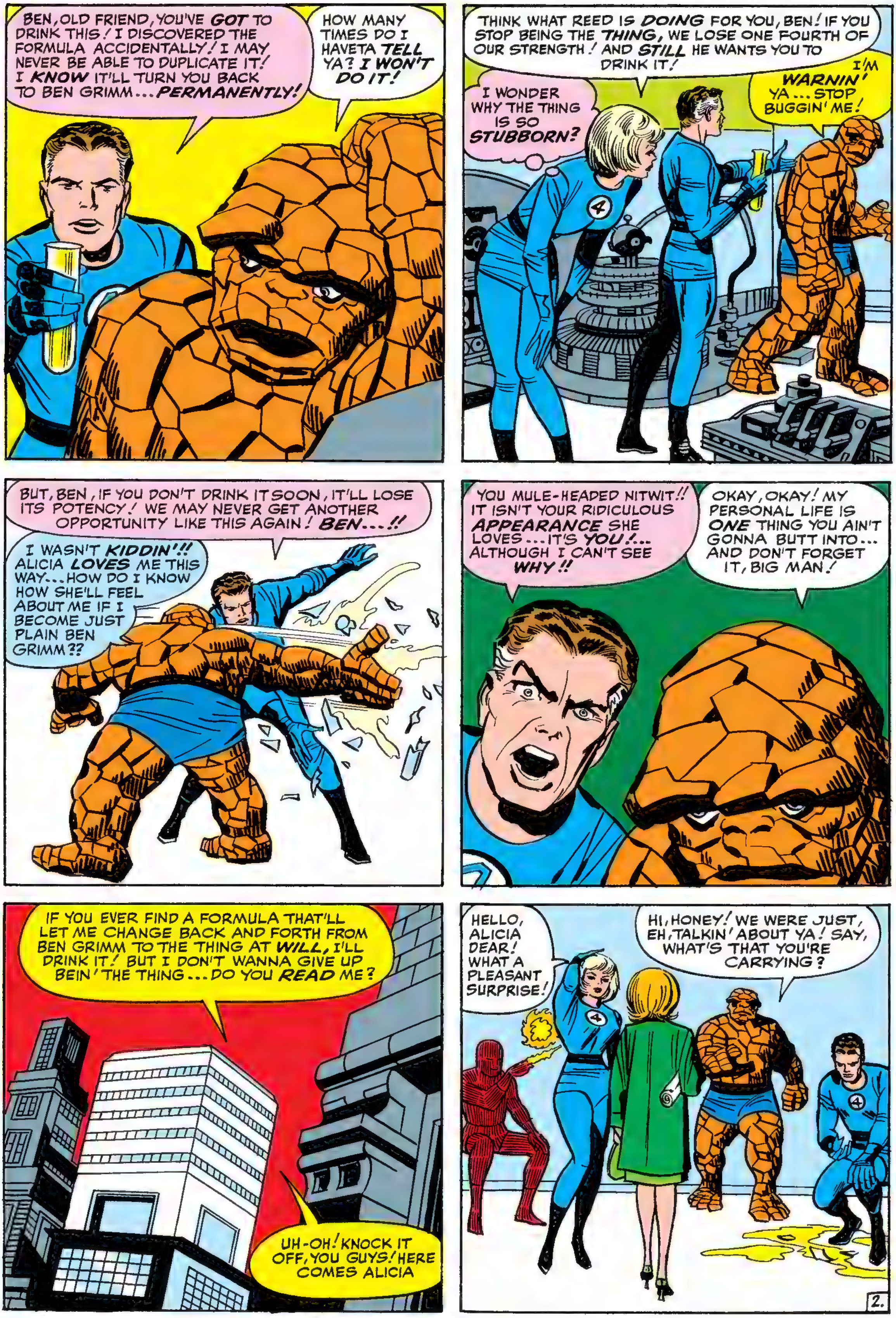
BEN, OLD FRIEND, YOU'VE **GOT** TO DRINK THIS! I DISCOVERED THE FORMULA ACCIDENTALLY! I MAY NEVER BE ABLE TO DUPLICATE IT! I **KNOW** IT'LL TURN YOU BACK TO BEN GRIMM... **PERMANENTLY!**
HOW MANY TIMES DO I HAVETA **TELL** YA? **I WON'T DO IT!**
THINK WHAT REED IS **DOING** FOR YOU, BEN! IF YOU STOP BEING THE **THING,** WE LOSE ONE FOURTH OF OUR STRENGTH! AND **STILL** HE WANTS YOU TO DRINK IT!
I WONDER WHY THE THING IS SO **STUBBORN?**
I'M **WARNIN'** YA... STOP BUGGIN' ME!
BUT, BEN, IF YOU DON'T DRINK IT SOON, IT'LL LOSE ITS POTENCY! WE MAY NEVER GET ANOTHER OPPORTUNITY LIKE THIS AGAIN! **BEN...!!**
I WASN'T **KIDDIN'!!** ALICIA **LOVES** ME THIS WAY... HOW DO I KNOW HOW SHE'LL FEEL ABOUT ME IF I BECOME JUST PLAIN BEN GRIMM??
YOU MULE-HEADED NITWIT!! IT ISN'T YOUR RIDICULOUS **APPEARANCE** SHE LOVES... IT'S **YOU!**... ALTHOUGH I CAN'T SEE **WHY!!**
OKAY, OKAY! MY PERSONAL LIFE IS **ONE** THING YOU AIN'T GONNA BUTT INTO... AND DON'T FORGET IT, BIG MAN!
IF YOU EVER FIND A FORMULA THAT'LL LET ME CHANGE BACK AND FORTH FROM BEN GRIMM TO THE THING AT **WILL,** I'LL DRINK IT! BUT I DON'T WANNA GIVE UP BEIN' THE THING... DO YOU **READ** ME?
UH-OH! KNOCK IT OFF, YOU GUYS! HERE COMES ALICIA
HELLO, ALICIA DEAR! WHAT A PLEASANT SURPRISE!
HI, HONEY! WE WERE JUST, EH, TALKIN' ABOUT YA! SAY, WHAT'S THAT YOU'RE CARRYING?
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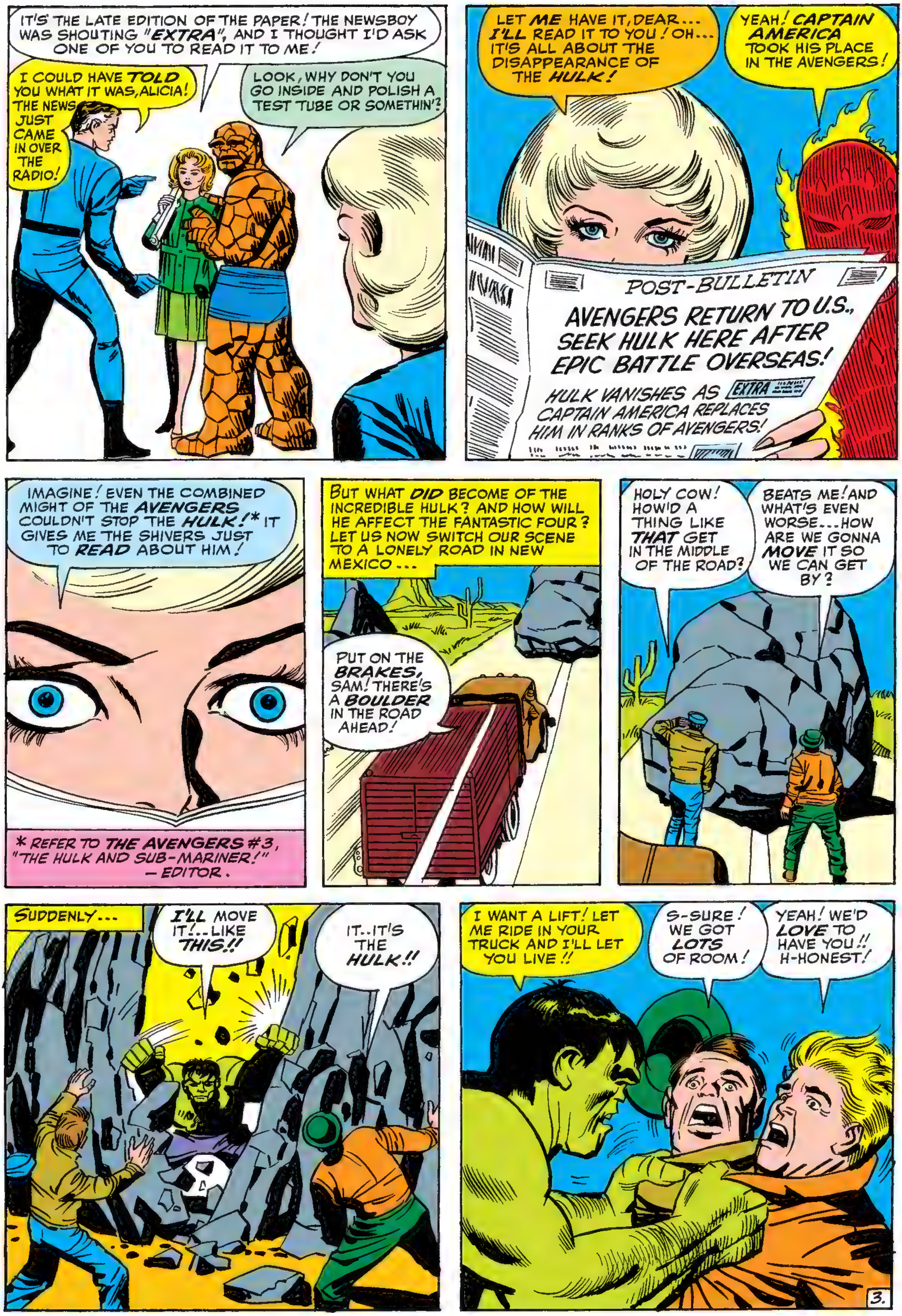
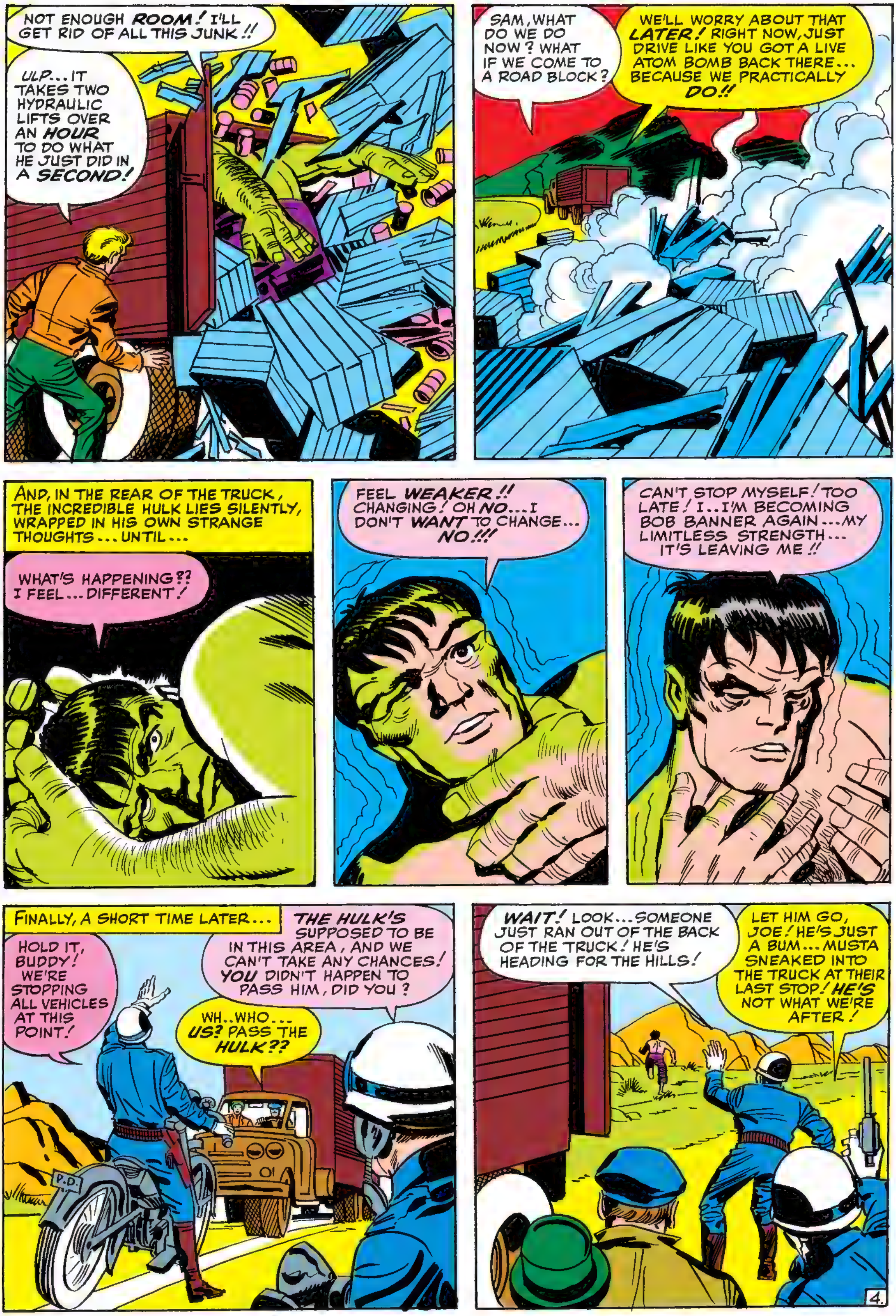
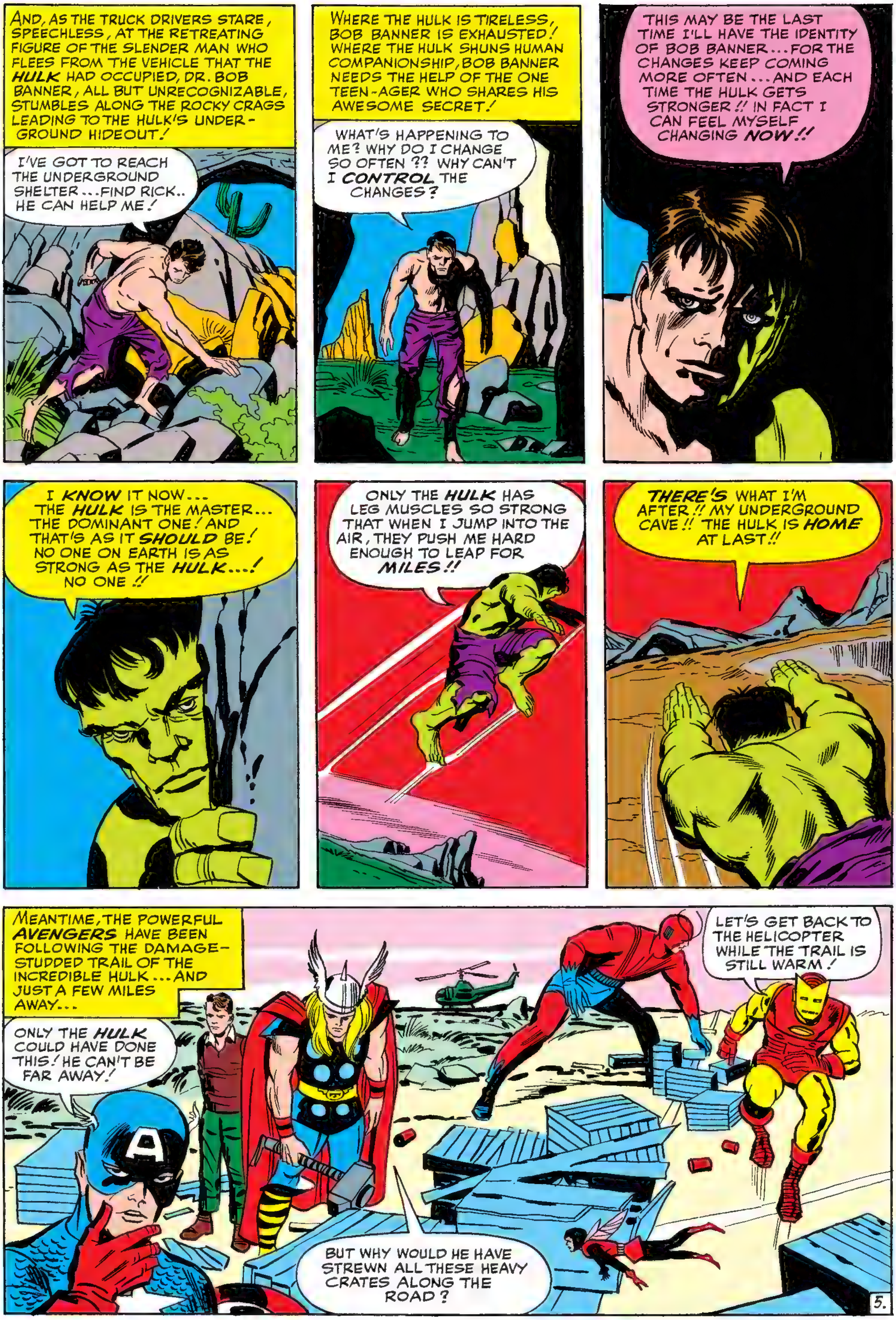
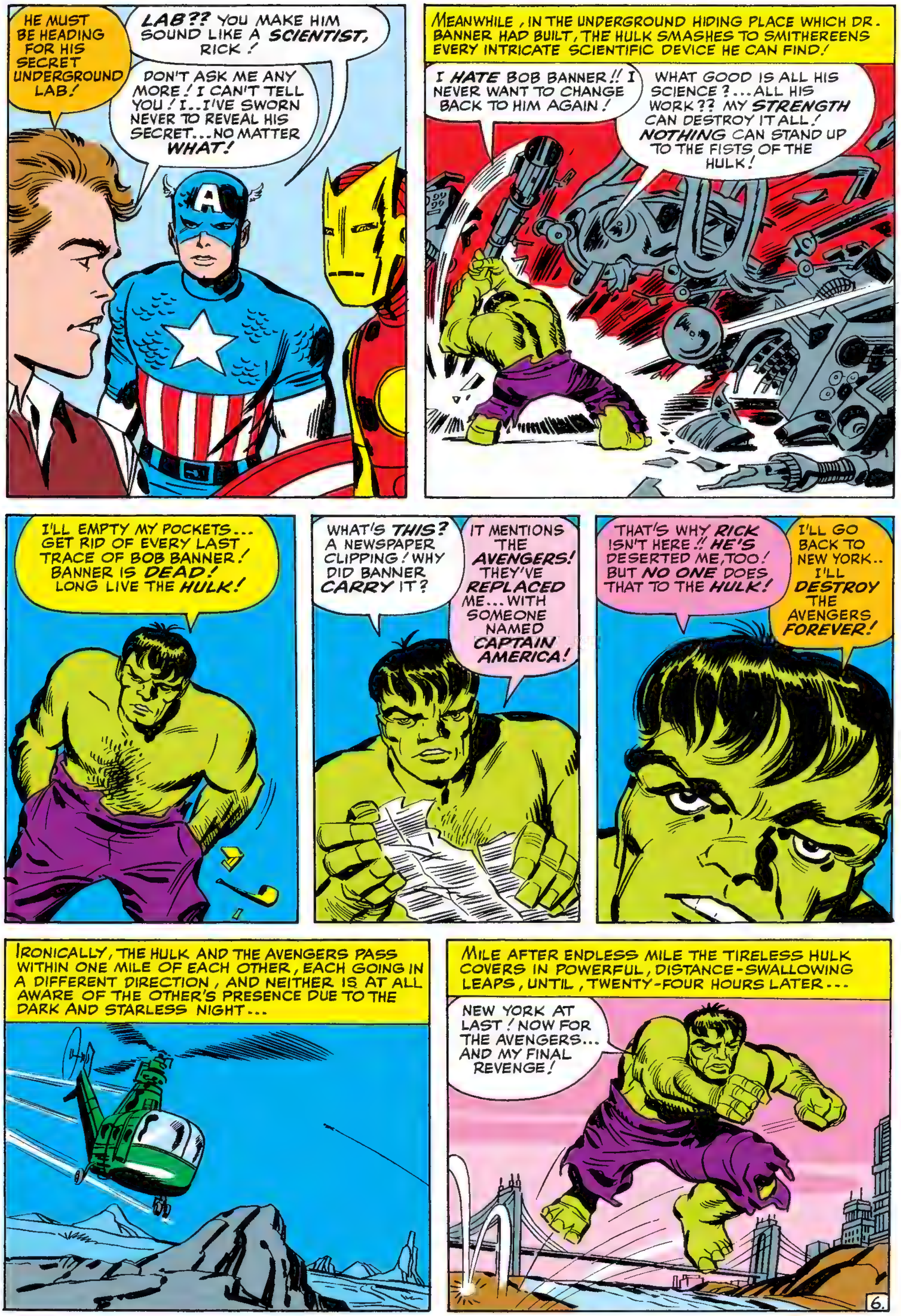
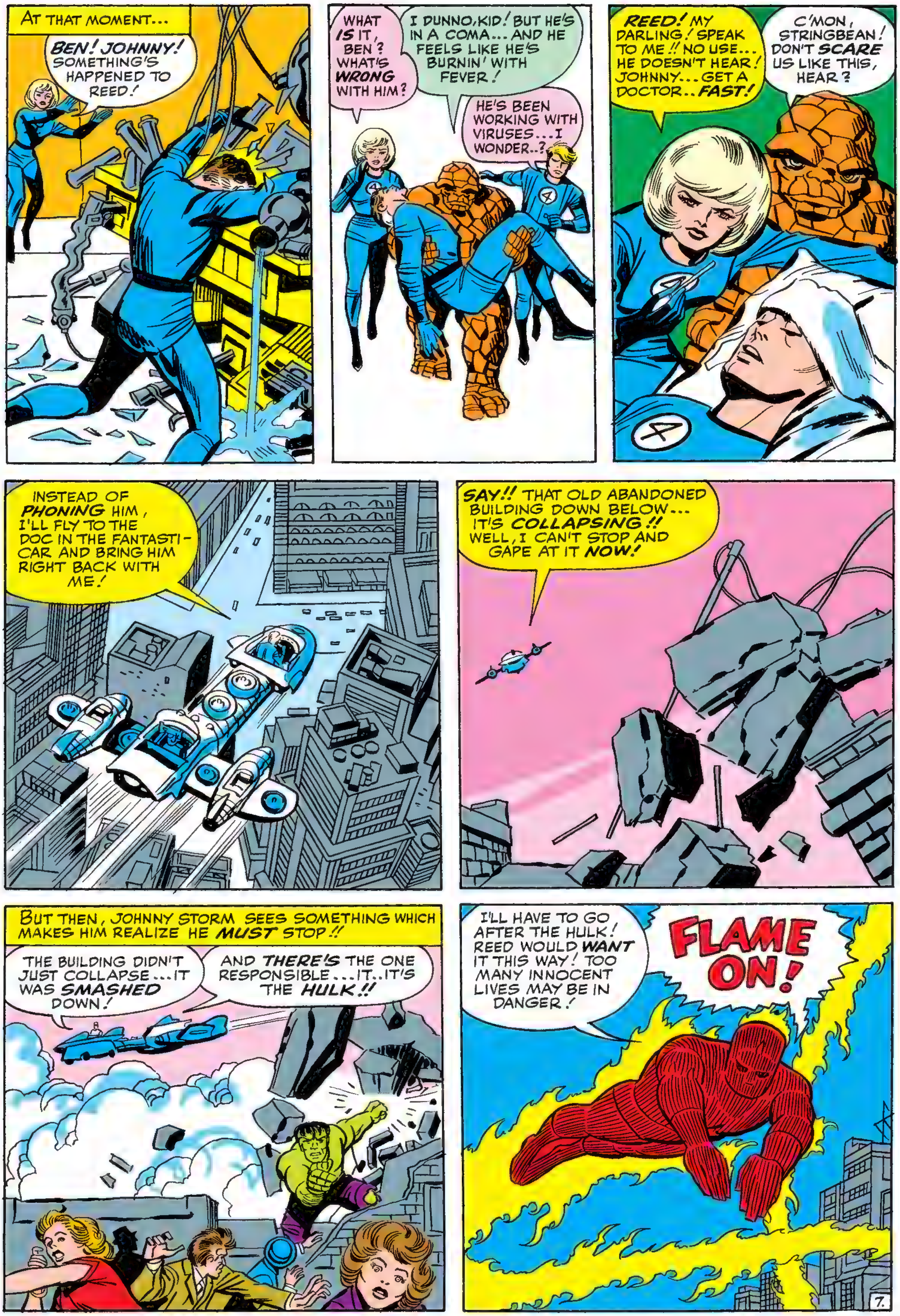
4

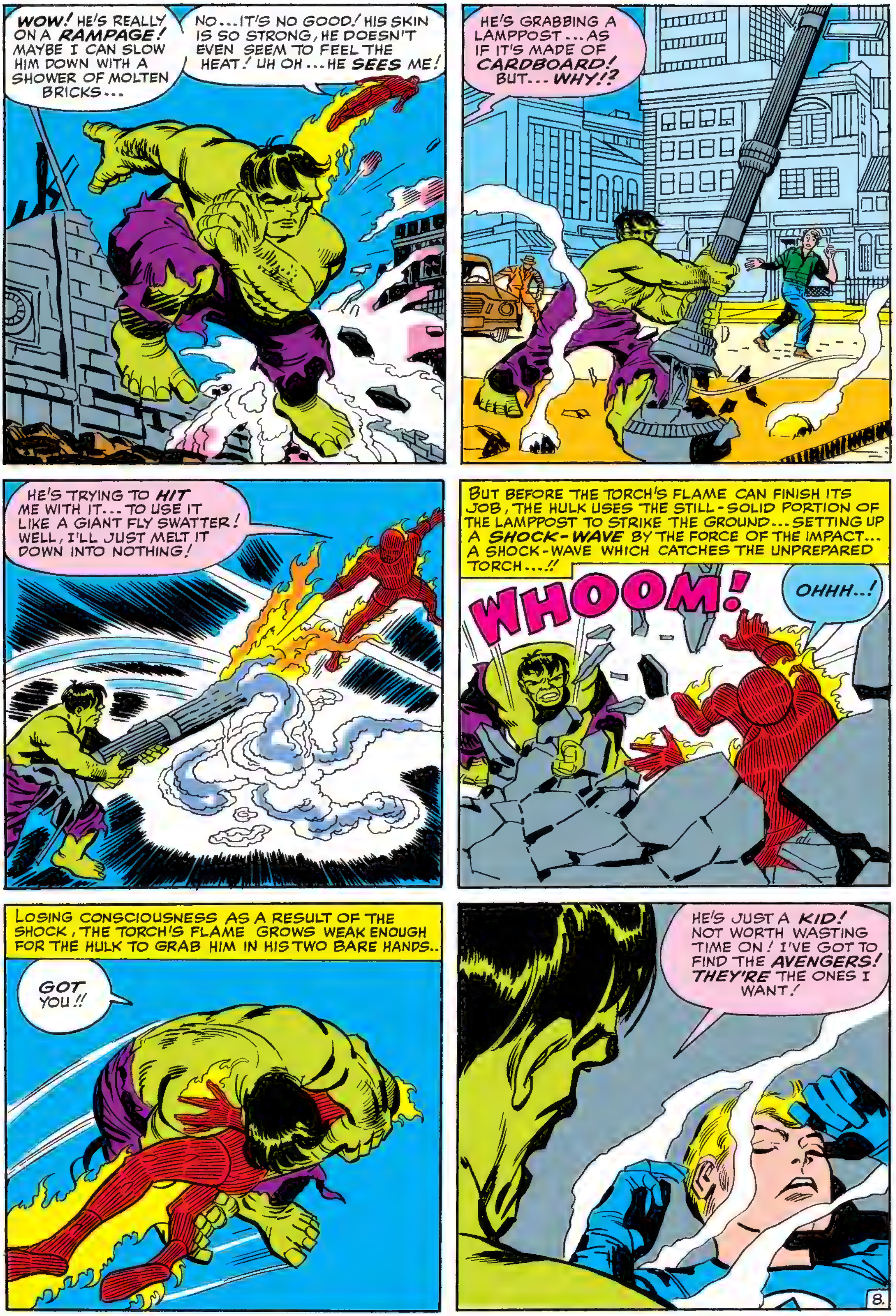

IT'S THE LATE EDITION OF THE PAPER! THE NEWSBOY WAS SHOUTING "**EXTRA**", AND I THOUGHT I'D ASK ONE OF YOU TO READ IT TO ME!
I COULD HAVE **TOLD** YOU WHAT IT WAS, ALICIA! THE NEWS JUST CAME IN OVER THE RADIO!
LOOK, WHY DON'T YOU GO INSIDE AND POLISH A TEST TUBE OR SOMETHIN'?
LET **ME** HAVE IT, DEAR... **I'LL** READ IT TO YOU! OH... IT'S ALL ABOUT THE DISAPPEARANCE OF THE **HULK**!
YEAH! **CAPTAIN AMERICA** TOOK HIS PLACE IN THE AVENGERS!
POST-BULLETIN
AVENGERS RETURN TO U.S., SEEK HULK HERE AFTER EPIC BATTLE OVERSEAS!
HULK VANISHES AS CAPTAIN AMERICA REPLACES HIM IN RANKS OF AVENGERS!
EXTRA
IMAGINE! EVEN THE COMBINED MIGHT OF THE **AVENGERS** COULDN'T STOP THE **HULK**!* IT GIVES ME THE SHIVERS JUST TO **READ** ABOUT HIM!
* REFER TO **THE AVENGERS #3**, "THE HULK AND SUB-MARINER!" — EDITOR.
BUT WHAT **DID** BECOME OF THE INCREDIBLE HULK? AND HOW WILL HE AFFECT THE FANTASTIC FOUR? LET US NOW SWITCH OUR SCENE TO A LONELY ROAD IN NEW MEXICO...
PUT ON THE **BRAKES**, SAM! THERE'S A **BOULDER** IN THE ROAD AHEAD!
HOLY COW! HOW'D A THING LIKE **THAT** GET IN THE MIDDLE OF THE ROAD?
BEATS ME! AND WHAT'S EVEN WORSE... HOW ARE WE GONNA **MOVE** IT SO WE CAN GET BY?
SUDDENLY...
I'LL MOVE IT!.. LIKE **THIS**!!
IT..IT'S THE **HULK**!!
I WANT A LIFT! LET ME RIDE IN YOUR TRUCK AND I'LL LET YOU LIVE!!
S-SURE! WE GOT **LOTS** OF ROOM!
YEAH! WE'D **LOVE** TO HAVE YOU!! H-HONEST!

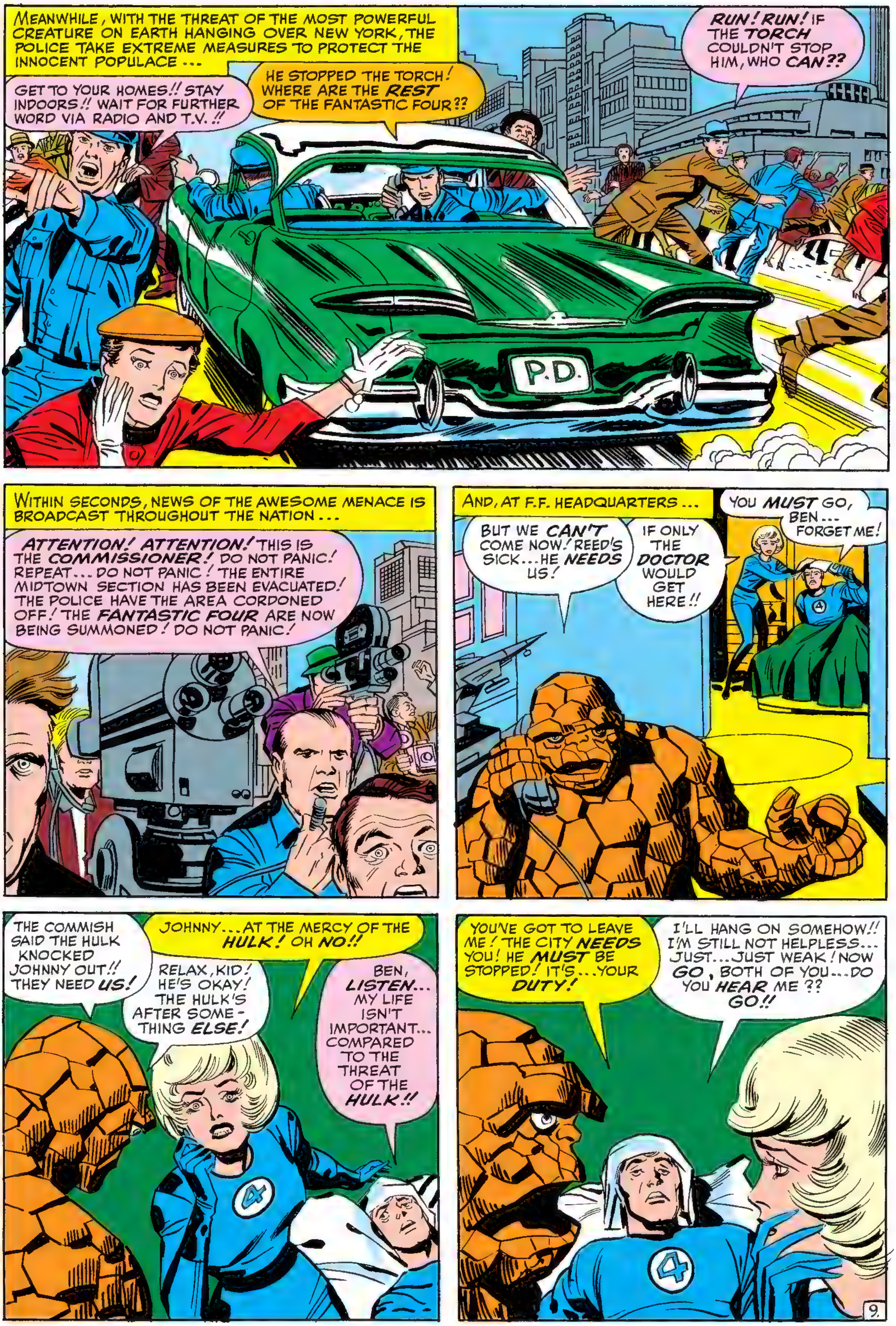

NOT ENOUGH **ROOM**! I'LL GET RID OF ALL THIS JUNK!!
ULP... IT TAKES TWO HYDRAULIC LIFTS OVER AN **HOUR** TO DO WHAT HE JUST DID IN A **SECOND**!
SAM, WHAT DO WE DO NOW? WHAT IF WE COME TO A ROAD BLOCK?
WE'LL WORRY ABOUT THAT **LATER**! RIGHT NOW, JUST DRIVE LIKE YOU GOT A LIVE ATOM BOMB BACK THERE... BECAUSE WE PRACTICALLY **DO**!!
AND, IN THE REAR OF THE TRUCK, THE INCREDIBLE HULK LIES SILENTLY, WRAPPED IN HIS OWN STRANGE THOUGHTS... UNTIL...
WHAT'S HAPPENING?? I FEEL... DIFFERENT!
FEEL **WEAKER**!! CHANGING! OH **NO**... I DON'T **WANT** TO CHANGE... **NO**!!!
CAN'T STOP MYSELF! TOO LATE! I..I'M BECOMING BOB BANNER AGAIN... MY LIMITLESS STRENGTH... IT'S LEAVING ME!!
FINALLY, A SHORT TIME LATER...
HOLD IT, BUDDY! WE'RE STOPPING ALL VEHICLES AT THIS POINT!
THE HULK'S SUPPOSED TO BE IN THIS AREA, AND WE CAN'T TAKE ANY CHANCES! **YOU** DIDN'T HAPPEN TO PASS HIM, DID YOU?
WH..WHO... **US?** PASS THE **HULK??**
P.D.
WAIT! LOOK... SOMEONE JUST RAN OUT OF THE BACK OF THE TRUCK! HE'S HEADING FOR THE HILLS!
LET HIM GO, **JOE**! HE'S JUST A BUM... MUSTA SNEAKED INTO THE TRUCK AT THEIR LAST STOP! **HE'S** NOT WHAT WE'RE AFTER!

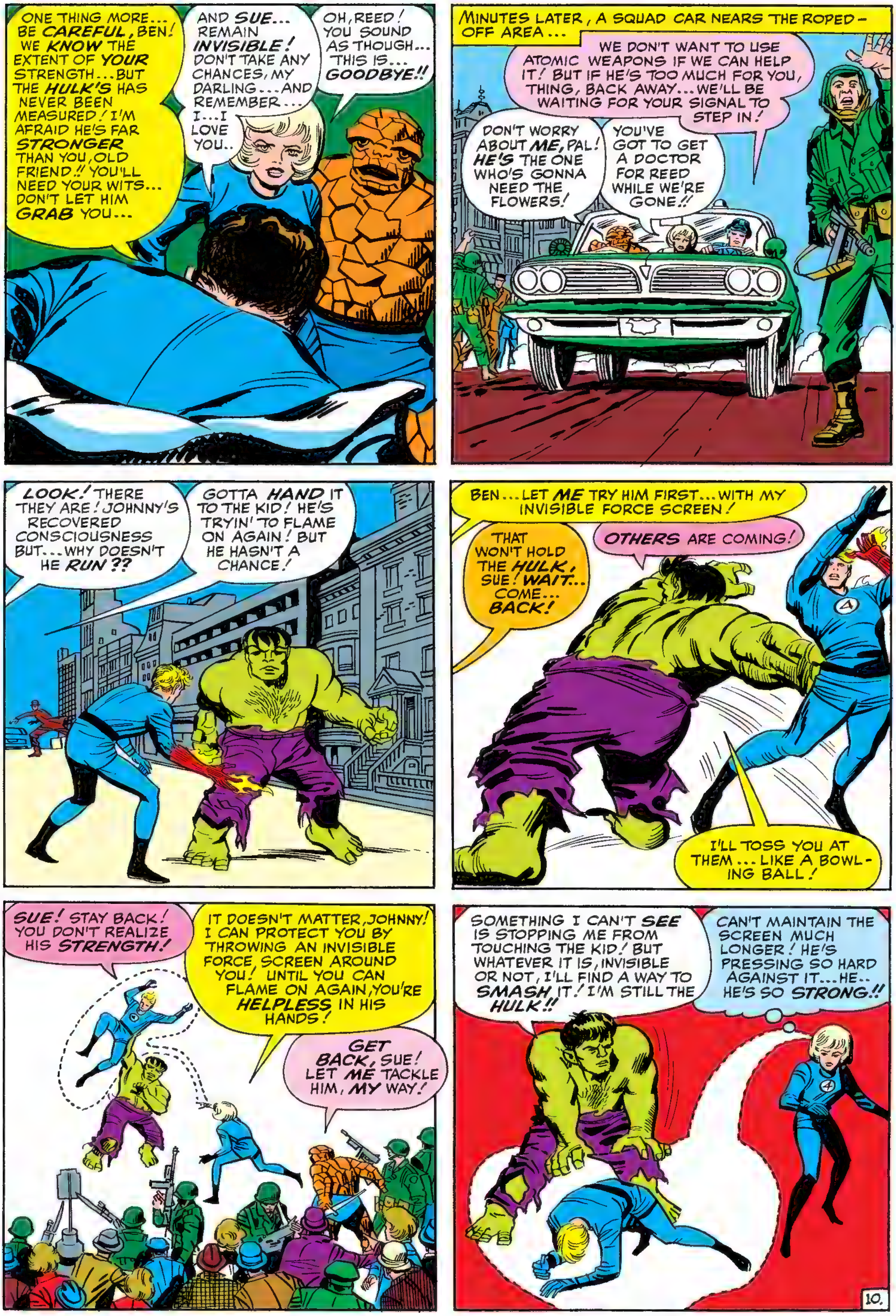

AND, AS THE TRUCK DRIVERS STARE, SPEECHLESS, AT THE RETREATING FIGURE OF THE SLENDER MAN WHO FLEES FROM THE VEHICLE THAT THE **HULK** HAD OCCUPIED, DR. BOB BANNER, ALL BUT UNRECOGNIZABLE, STUMBLES ALONG THE ROCKY CRAGS LEADING TO THE HULK'S UNDERGROUND HIDEOUT!
I'VE GOT TO REACH THE UNDERGROUND SHELTER...FIND RICK.. HE CAN HELP ME!
WHERE THE HULK IS TIRELESS, BOB BANNER IS EXHAUSTED! WHERE THE HULK SHUNS HUMAN COMPANIONSHIP, BOB BANNER NEEDS THE HELP OF THE ONE TEEN-AGER WHO SHARES HIS AWESOME SECRET!
WHAT'S HAPPENING TO ME? WHY DO I CHANGE SO OFTEN ?? WHY CAN'T I **CONTROL** THE CHANGES?
THIS MAY BE THE LAST TIME I'LL HAVE THE IDENTITY OF BOB BANNER...FOR THE CHANGES KEEP COMING MORE OFTEN...AND EACH TIME THE HULK GETS STRONGER!! IN FACT I CAN FEEL MYSELF CHANGING **NOW!!**
I **KNOW** IT NOW... THE **HULK** IS THE MASTER... THE DOMINANT ONE! AND THAT'S AS IT **SHOULD** BE! NO ONE ON EARTH IS AS STRONG AS THE **HULK...!** NO ONE !!
ONLY THE **HULK** HAS LEG MUSCLES SO STRONG THAT WHEN I JUMP INTO THE AIR, THEY PUSH ME HARD ENOUGH TO LEAP FOR **MILES!!**
THERE'S WHAT I'M AFTER!! MY UNDERGROUND CAVE!! THE HULK IS **HOME** AT LAST!!
MEANTIME, THE POWERFUL **AVENGERS** HAVE BEEN FOLLOWING THE DAMAGE-STUDDED TRAIL OF THE INCREDIBLE HULK...AND JUST A FEW MILES AWAY...
ONLY THE **HULK** COULD HAVE DONE THIS! HE CAN'T BE FAR AWAY!
LET'S GET BACK TO THE HELICOPTER WHILE THE TRAIL IS STILL WARM!
BUT WHY WOULD HE HAVE STREWN ALL THESE HEAVY CRATES ALONG THE ROAD?


HE MUST BE HEADING FOR HIS SECRET UNDERGROUND LAB!
LAB?? YOU MAKE HIM SOUND LIKE A SCIENTIST, RICK!
DON'T ASK ME ANY MORE! I CAN'T TELL YOU! I..I'VE SWORN NEVER TO REVEAL HIS SECRET...NO MATTER WHAT!
MEANWHILE, IN THE UNDERGROUND HIDING PLACE WHICH DR. BANNER HAD BUILT, THE HULK SMASHES TO SMITHEREENS EVERY INTRICATE SCIENTIFIC DEVICE HE CAN FIND!
I HATE BOB BANNER!! I NEVER WANT TO CHANGE BACK TO HIM AGAIN!
WHAT GOOD IS ALL HIS SCIENCE?...ALL HIS WORK?? MY STRENGTH CAN DESTROY IT ALL! NOTHING CAN STAND UP TO THE FISTS OF THE HULK!
I'LL EMPTY MY POCKETS... GET RID OF EVERY LAST TRACE OF BOB BANNER! BANNER IS DEAD! LONG LIVE THE HULK!
WHAT'S THIS? A NEWSPAPER CLIPPING! WHY DID BANNER CARRY IT?
IT MENTIONS THE AVENGERS! THEY'VE REPLACED ME... WITH SOMEONE NAMED CAPTAIN AMERICA!
THAT'S WHY RICK ISN'T HERE!! HE'S DESERTED ME, TOO! BUT NO ONE DOES THAT TO THE HULK!
I'LL GO BACK TO NEW YORK.. I'LL DESTROY THE AVENGERS FOREVER!
IRONICALLY, THE HULK AND THE AVENGERS PASS WITHIN ONE MILE OF EACH OTHER, EACH GOING IN A DIFFERENT DIRECTION, AND NEITHER IS AT ALL AWARE OF THE OTHER'S PRESENCE DUE TO THE DARK AND STARLESS NIGHT...
MILE AFTER ENDLESS MILE THE TIRELESS HULK COVERS IN POWERFUL, DISTANCE-SWALLOWING LEAPS, UNTIL, TWENTY-FOUR HOURS LATER---
NEW YORK AT LAST! NOW FOR THE AVENGERS... AND MY FINAL REVENGE!


AT THAT MOMENT...
BEN! JOHNNY! SOMETHING'S HAPPENED TO REED!
WHAT IS IT, BEN? WHAT'S WRONG WITH HIM?
I DUNNO, KID! BUT HE'S IN A COMA... AND HE FEELS LIKE HE'S BURNIN' WITH FEVER!
HE'S BEEN WORKING WITH VIRUSES... I WONDER..?
REED! MY DARLING! SPEAK TO ME!! NO USE... HE DOESN'T HEAR! JOHNNY... GET A DOCTOR.. FAST!
C'MON, STRINGBEAN! DON'T SCARE US LIKE THIS, HEAR?
INSTEAD OF PHONING HIM, I'LL FLY TO THE DOC IN THE FANTASTI-CAR AND BRING HIM RIGHT BACK WITH ME!
SAY!! THAT OLD ABANDONED BUILDING DOWN BELOW... IT'S COLLAPSING!! WELL, I CAN'T STOP AND GAPE AT IT NOW!
BUT THEN, JOHNNY STORM SEES SOMETHING WHICH MAKES HIM REALIZE HE MUST STOP!!
THE BUILDING DIDN'T JUST COLLAPSE... IT WAS SMASHED DOWN!
AND THERE'S THE ONE RESPONSIBLE... IT.. IT'S THE HULK!!
I'LL HAVE TO GO AFTER THE HULK! REED WOULD WANT IT THIS WAY! TOO MANY INNOCENT LIVES MAY BE IN DANGER!
FLAME ON!


WOW! HE'S REALLY ON A RAMPAGE! MAYBE I CAN SLOW HIM DOWN WITH A SHOWER OF MOLTEN BRICKS...
NO...IT'S NO GOOD! HIS SKIN IS SO STRONG, HE DOESN'T EVEN SEEM TO FEEL THE HEAT! UH OH...HE SEES ME!
HE'S GRABBING A LAMPPOST...AS IF IT'S MADE OF CARDBOARD! BUT...WHY!?
HE'S TRYING TO HIT ME WITH IT...TO USE IT LIKE A GIANT FLY SWATTER! WELL, I'LL JUST MELT IT DOWN INTO NOTHING!
BUT BEFORE THE TORCH'S FLAME CAN FINISH ITS JOB, THE HULK USES THE STILL-SOLID PORTION OF THE LAMPPOST TO STRIKE THE GROUND...SETTING UP A SHOCK-WAVE BY THE FORCE OF THE IMPACT... A SHOCK-WAVE WHICH CATCHES THE UNPREPARED TORCH...!!
WHOOM!
OHHH..!
LOSING CONSCIOUSNESS AS A RESULT OF THE SHOCK, THE TORCH'S FLAME GROWS WEAK ENOUGH FOR THE HULK TO GRAB HIM IN HIS TWO BARE HANDS..
GOT YOU!!
HE'S JUST A KID! NOT WORTH WASTING TIME ON! I'VE GOT TO FIND THE AVENGERS! THEY'RE THE ONES I WANT!


MEANWHILE, WITH THE THREAT OF THE MOST POWERFUL CREATURE ON EARTH HANGING OVER NEW YORK, THE POLICE TAKE EXTREME MEASURES TO PROTECT THE INNOCENT POPULACE...
GET TO YOUR HOMES!! STAY INDOORS!! WAIT FOR FURTHER WORD VIA RADIO AND T.V.!!
HE STOPPED THE TORCH! WHERE ARE THE REST OF THE FANTASTIC FOUR??
RUN! RUN! IF THE TORCH COULDN'T STOP HIM, WHO CAN??
P.D.
WITHIN SECONDS, NEWS OF THE AWESOME MENACE IS BROADCAST THROUGHOUT THE NATION...
ATTENTION! ATTENTION! THIS IS THE COMMISSIONER! DO NOT PANIC! REPEAT... DO NOT PANIC! THE ENTIRE MIDTOWN SECTION HAS BEEN EVACUATED! THE POLICE HAVE THE AREA CORDONED OFF! THE FANTASTIC FOUR ARE NOW BEING SUMMONED! DO NOT PANIC!
AND, AT F.F. HEADQUARTERS...
YOU MUST GO, BEN... FORGET ME!
BUT WE CAN'T COME NOW! REED'S SICK... HE NEEDS US!
IF ONLY THE DOCTOR WOULD GET HERE!!
THE COMMISH SAID THE HULK KNOCKED JOHNNY OUT!! THEY NEED US!
JOHNNY... AT THE MERCY OF THE HULK! OH NO!!
RELAX, KID! HE'S OKAY! THE HULK'S AFTER SOME-THING ELSE!
BEN, LISTEN... MY LIFE ISN'T IMPORTANT... COMPARED TO THE THREAT OF THE HULK!!
YOU'VE GOT TO LEAVE ME! THE CITY NEEDS YOU! HE MUST BE STOPPED! IT'S... YOUR DUTY!
I'LL HANG ON SOMEHOW!! I'M STILL NOT HELPLESS... JUST... JUST WEAK! NOW GO, BOTH OF YOU... DO YOU HEAR ME ?? GO!!


ONE THING MORE... BE CAREFUL, BEN! WE KNOW THE EXTENT OF YOUR STRENGTH... BUT THE HULK'S HAS NEVER BEEN MEASURED! I'M AFRAID HE'S FAR STRONGER THAN YOU, OLD FRIEND!! YOU'LL NEED YOUR WITS... DON'T LET HIM GRAB YOU...
AND SUE... REMAIN INVISIBLE! DON'T TAKE ANY CHANCES, MY DARLING... AND REMEMBER... I... I LOVE YOU..
OH, REED! YOU SOUND AS THOUGH... THIS IS... GOODBYE!!
MINUTES LATER, A SQUAD CAR NEARS THE ROPED-OFF AREA...
WE DON'T WANT TO USE ATOMIC WEAPONS IF WE CAN HELP IT! BUT IF HE'S TOO MUCH FOR YOU, THING, BACK AWAY... WE'LL BE WAITING FOR YOUR SIGNAL TO STEP IN!
DON'T WORRY ABOUT ME, PAL! HE'S THE ONE WHO'S GONNA NEED THE FLOWERS!
YOU'VE GOT TO GET A DOCTOR FOR REED WHILE WE'RE GONE!!
LOOK! THERE THEY ARE! JOHNNY'S RECOVERED CONSCIOUSNESS BUT... WHY DOESN'T HE RUN??
GOTTA HAND IT TO THE KID! HE'S TRYIN' TO FLAME ON AGAIN! BUT HE HASN'T A CHANCE!
BEN... LET ME TRY HIM FIRST... WITH MY INVISIBLE FORCE SCREEN!
THAT WON'T HOLD THE HULK, SUE! WAIT... COME... BACK!
OTHERS ARE COMING!
I'LL TOSS YOU AT THEM... LIKE A BOWLING BALL!
SUE! STAY BACK! YOU DON'T REALIZE HIS STRENGTH!
IT DOESN'T MATTER, JOHNNY! I CAN PROTECT YOU BY THROWING AN INVISIBLE FORCE SCREEN AROUND YOU! UNTIL YOU CAN FLAME ON AGAIN, YOU'RE HELPLESS IN HIS HANDS!
GET BACK, SUE! LET ME TACKLE HIM, MY WAY!
SOMETHING I CAN'T SEE IS STOPPING ME FROM TOUCHING THE KID! BUT WHATEVER IT IS, INVISIBLE OR NOT, I'LL FIND A WAY TO SMASH IT! I'M STILL THE HULK!!
CAN'T MAINTAIN THE SCREEN MUCH LONGER! HE'S PRESSING SO HARD AGAINST IT... HE.. HE'S SO STRONG!!
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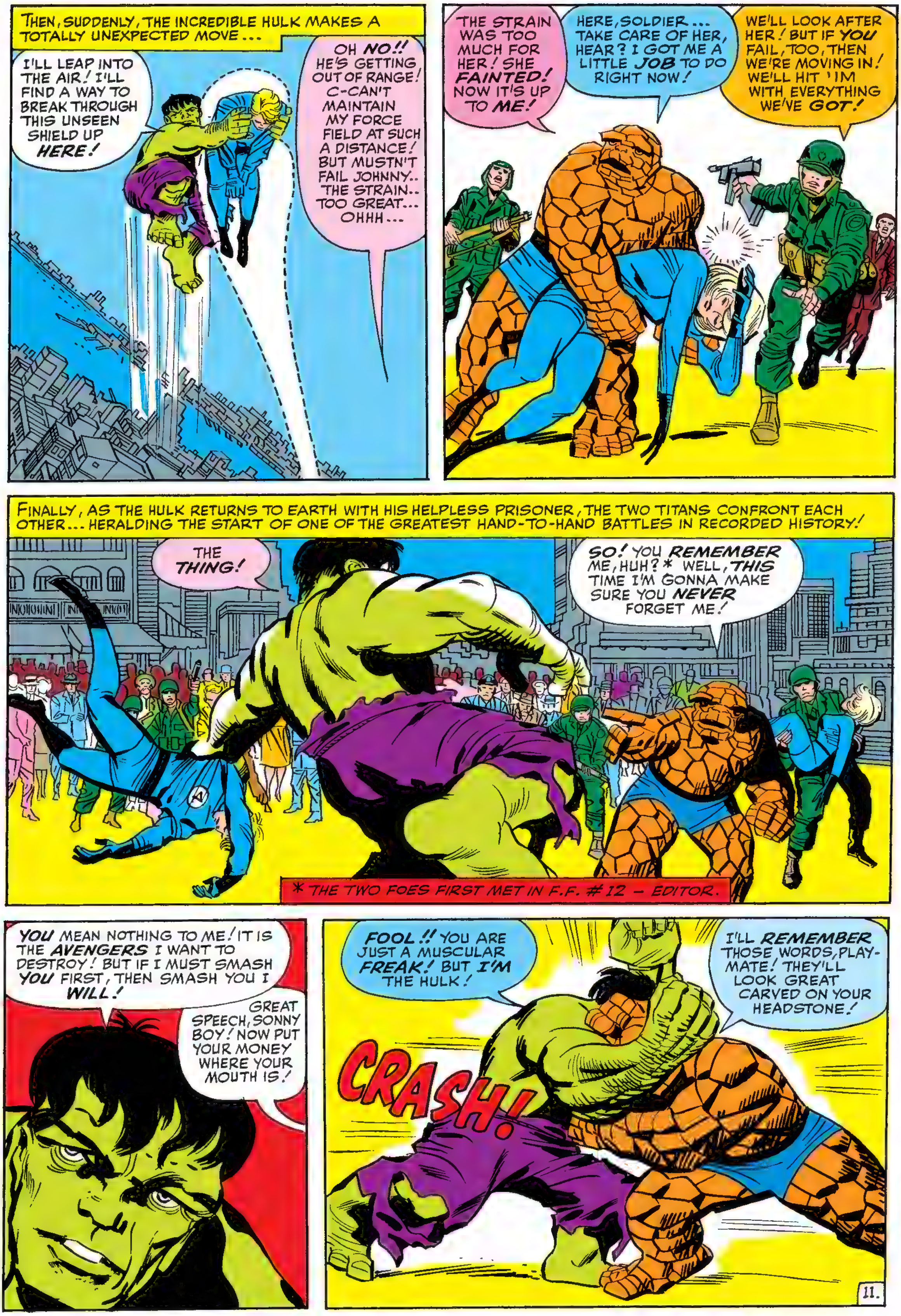
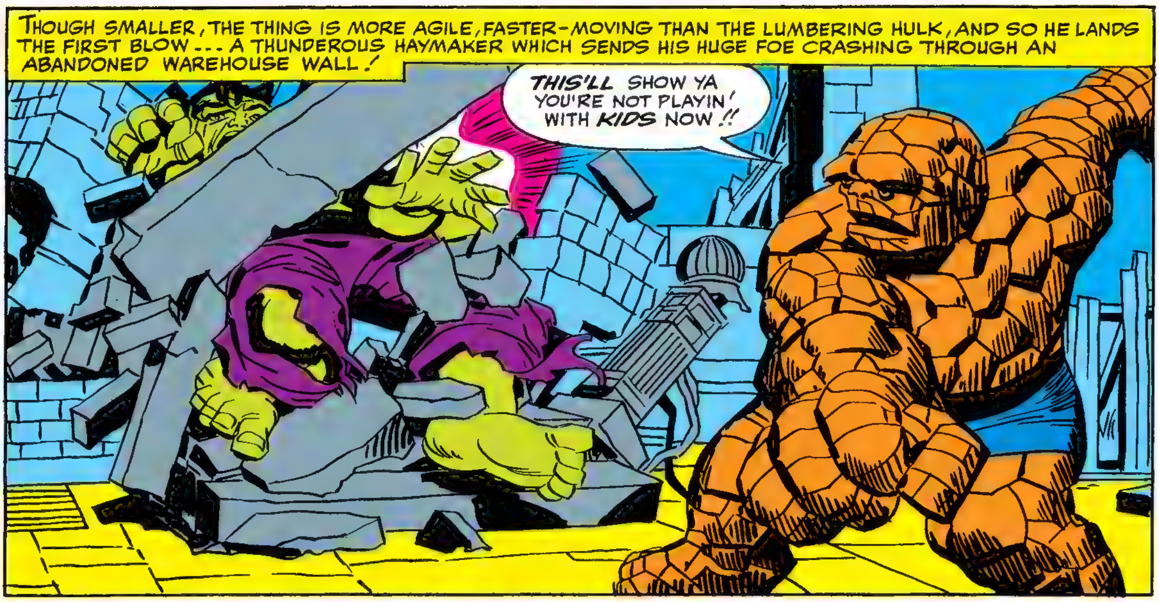
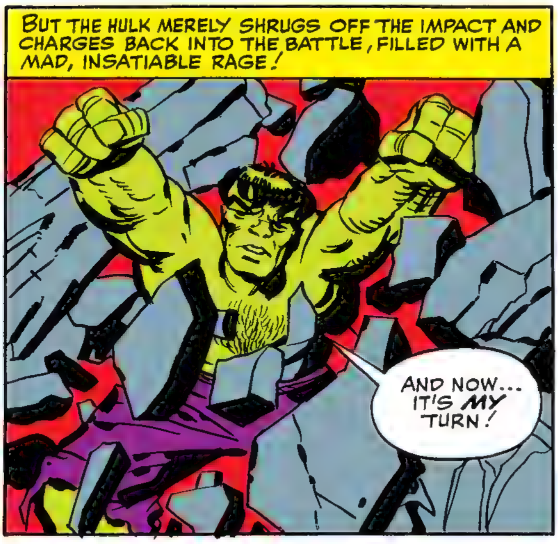
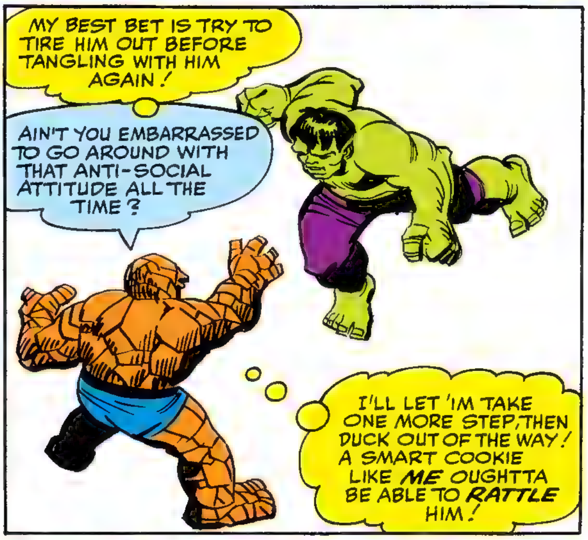
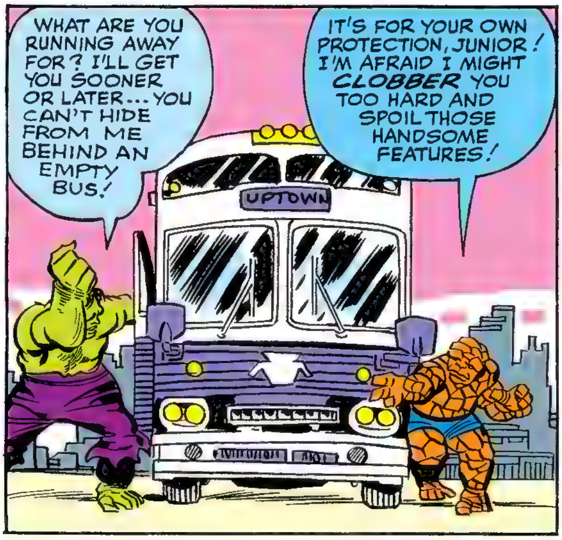
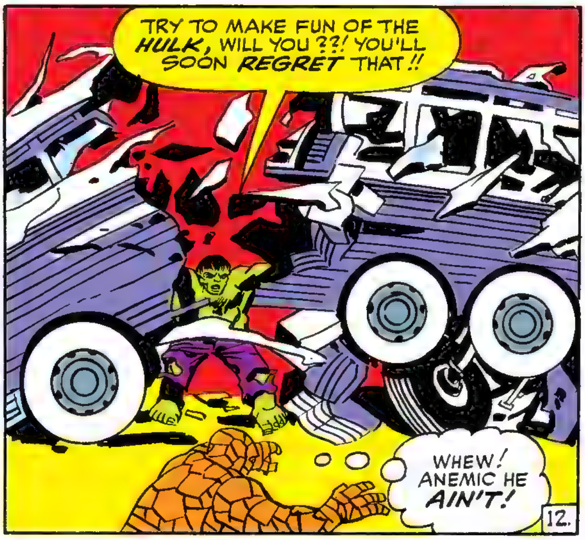

THEN, SUDDENLY, THE INCREDIBLE HULK MAKES A TOTALLY UNEXPECTED MOVE...
I'LL LEAP INTO THE AIR! I'LL FIND A WAY TO BREAK THROUGH THIS UNSEEN SHIELD UP HERE!
OH NO!! HE'S GETTING OUT OF RANGE! C-CAN'T MAINTAIN MY FORCE FIELD AT SUCH A DISTANCE! BUT MUSTN'T FAIL JOHNNY.. THE STRAIN.. TOO GREAT... OHHH...
THE STRAIN WAS TOO MUCH FOR HER! SHE FAINTED! NOW IT'S UP TO ME!
HERE, SOLDIER... TAKE CARE OF HER, HEAR? I GOT ME A LITTLE JOB TO DO RIGHT NOW!
WE'LL LOOK AFTER HER! BUT IF YOU FAIL, TOO, THEN WE'RE MOVING IN! WE'LL HIT 'IM WITH EVERYTHING WE'VE GOT!
FINALLY, AS THE HULK RETURNS TO EARTH WITH HIS HELPLESS PRISONER, THE TWO TITANS CONFRONT EACH OTHER... HERALDING THE START OF ONE OF THE GREATEST HAND-TO-HAND BATTLES IN RECORDED HISTORY!
THE THING!
SO! YOU REMEMBER ME, HUH?* WELL, THIS TIME I'M GONNA MAKE SURE YOU NEVER FORGET ME!
* THE TWO FOES FIRST MET IN F.F. #12 – EDITOR.
YOU MEAN NOTHING TO ME! IT IS THE AVENGERS I WANT TO DESTROY! BUT IF I MUST SMASH YOU FIRST, THEN SMASH YOU I WILL!
GREAT SPEECH, SONNY BOY! NOW PUT YOUR MONEY WHERE YOUR MOUTH IS!
FOOL!! YOU ARE JUST A MUSCULAR FREAK! BUT I'M THE HULK!
I'LL REMEMBER THOSE WORDS, PLAYMATE! THEY'LL LOOK GREAT CARVED ON YOUR HEADSTONE!
CRASH!

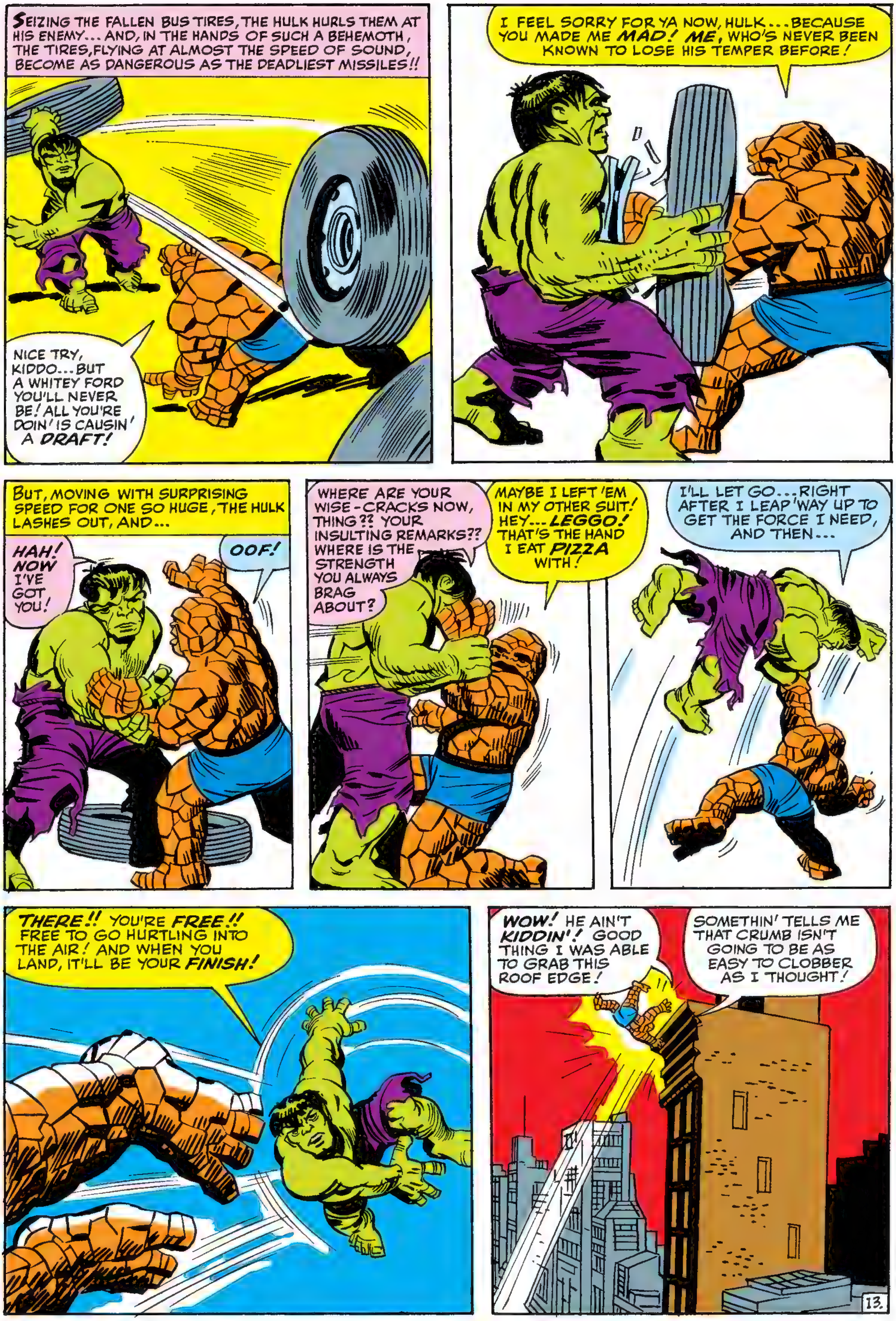

THOUGH SMALLER, THE THING IS MORE AGILE, FASTER-MOVING THAN THE LUMBERING HULK, AND SO HE LANDS THE FIRST BLOW... A THUNDEROUS HAYMAKER WHICH SENDS HIS HUGE FOE CRASHING THROUGH AN ABANDONED WAREHOUSE WALL!
THIS'LL SHOW YA YOU'RE NOT PLAYIN' WITH *KIDS* NOW!!

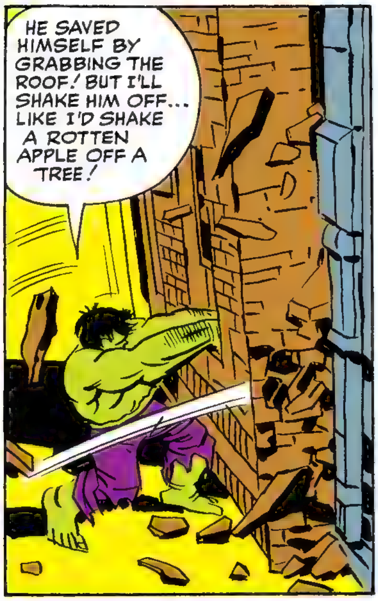

BUT THE HULK MERELY SHRUGS OFF THE IMPACT AND CHARGES BACK INTO THE BATTLE, FILLED WITH A MAD, INSATIABLE RAGE!
AND NOW... IT'S *MY* TURN!

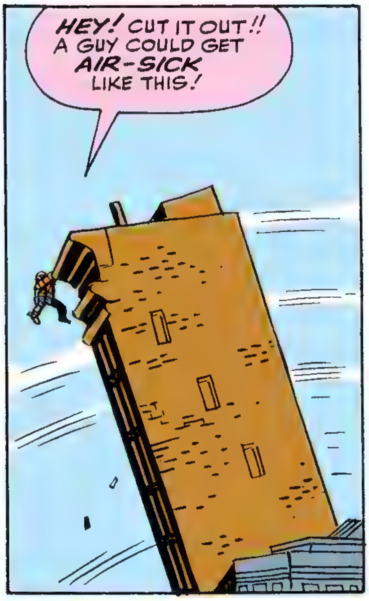

MY BEST BET IS TRY TO TIRE HIM OUT BEFORE TANGLING WITH HIM AGAIN!
AIN'T YOU EMBARRASSED TO GO AROUND WITH THAT ANTI-SOCIAL ATTITUDE ALL THE TIME?
I'LL LET 'IM TAKE ONE MORE STEP; THEN DUCK OUT OF THE WAY! A SMART COOKIE LIKE *ME* OUGHTTA BE ABLE TO *RATTLE* HIM!

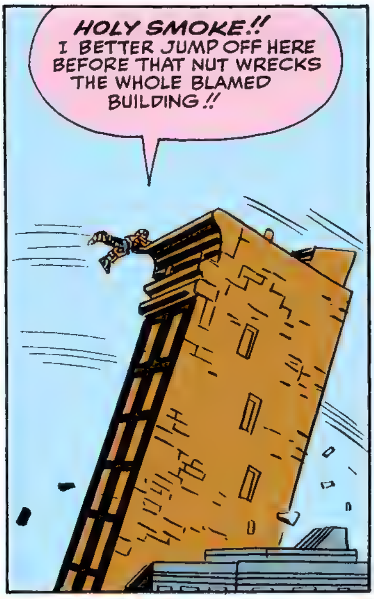

WHAT ARE YOU RUNNING AWAY FOR? I'LL GET YOU SOONER OR LATER... YOU CAN'T HIDE FROM ME BEHIND AN EMPTY BUS!
IT'S FOR YOUR OWN PROTECTION, JUNIOR! I'M AFRAID I MIGHT *CLOBBER* YOU TOO HARD AND SPOIL THOSE HANDSOME FEATURES!
UPTOWN

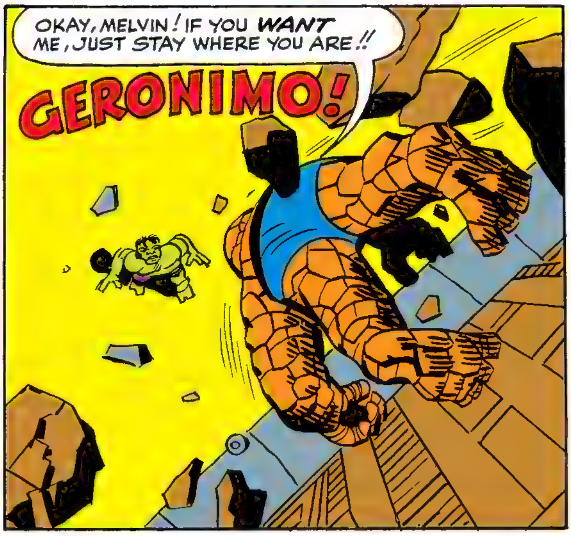

TRY TO MAKE FUN OF THE *HULK*, WILL YOU??! YOU'LL SOON *REGRET* THAT!!
WHEW! ANEMIC HE *AIN'T*!

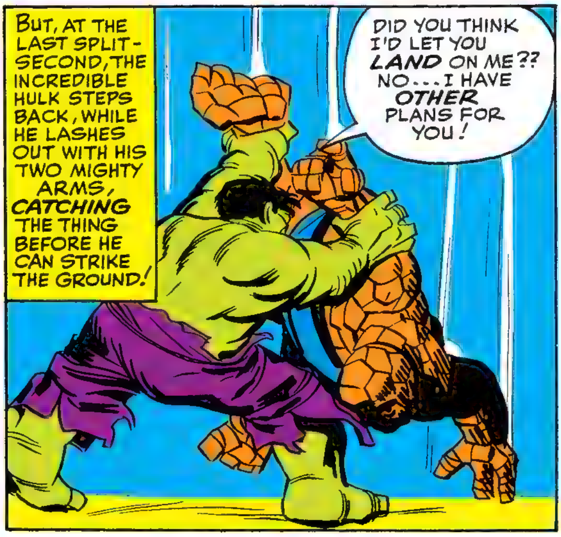

SEIZING THE FALLEN BUS TIRES, THE HULK HURLS THEM AT HIS ENEMY... AND, IN THE HANDS OF SUCH A BEHEMOTH, THE TIRES, FLYING AT ALMOST THE SPEED OF SOUND, BECOME AS DANGEROUS AS THE DEADLIEST MISSILES!!
NICE TRY, KIDDO... BUT A WHITEY FORD YOU'LL NEVER BE! ALL YOU'RE DOIN' IS CAUSIN' A DRAFT!
I FEEL SORRY FOR YA NOW, HULK... BECAUSE YOU MADE ME MAD! ME, WHO'S NEVER BEEN KNOWN TO LOSE HIS TEMPER BEFORE!
BUT, MOVING WITH SURPRISING SPEED FOR ONE SO HUGE, THE HULK LASHES OUT, AND...
HAH! NOW I'VE GOT YOU!
OOF!
WHERE ARE YOUR WISE-CRACKS NOW, THING?? YOUR INSULTING REMARKS?? WHERE IS THE STRENGTH YOU ALWAYS BRAG ABOUT?
MAYBE I LEFT 'EM IN MY OTHER SUIT! HEY... LEGGO! THAT'S THE HAND I EAT PIZZA WITH!
I'LL LET GO... RIGHT AFTER I LEAP 'WAY UP TO GET THE FORCE I NEED, AND THEN...
THERE!! YOU'RE FREE!! FREE TO GO HURTLING INTO THE AIR! AND WHEN YOU LAND, IT'LL BE YOUR FINISH!
WOW! HE AIN'T KIDDIN'! GOOD THING I WAS ABLE TO GRAB THIS ROOF EDGE!
SOMETHIN' TELLS ME THAT CRUMB ISN'T GOING TO BE AS EASY TO CLOBBER AS I THOUGHT!

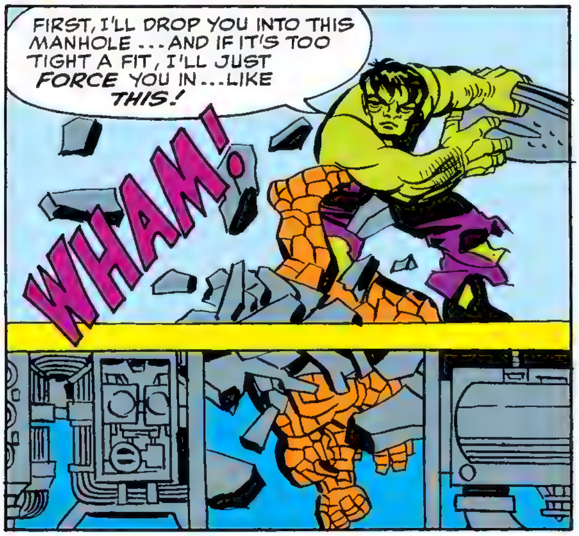

HE SAVED HIMSELF BY GRABBING THE ROOF! BUT I'LL SHAKE HIM OFF... LIKE I'D SHAKE A ROTTEN APPLE OFF A TREE!

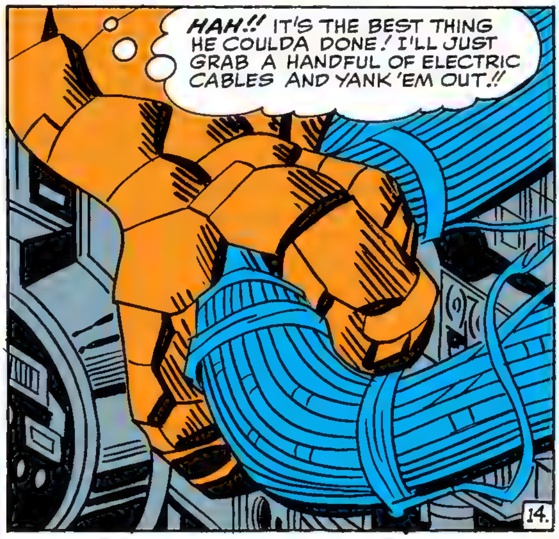

HEY! CUT IT OUT!! A GUY COULD GET AIR-SICK LIKE THIS!

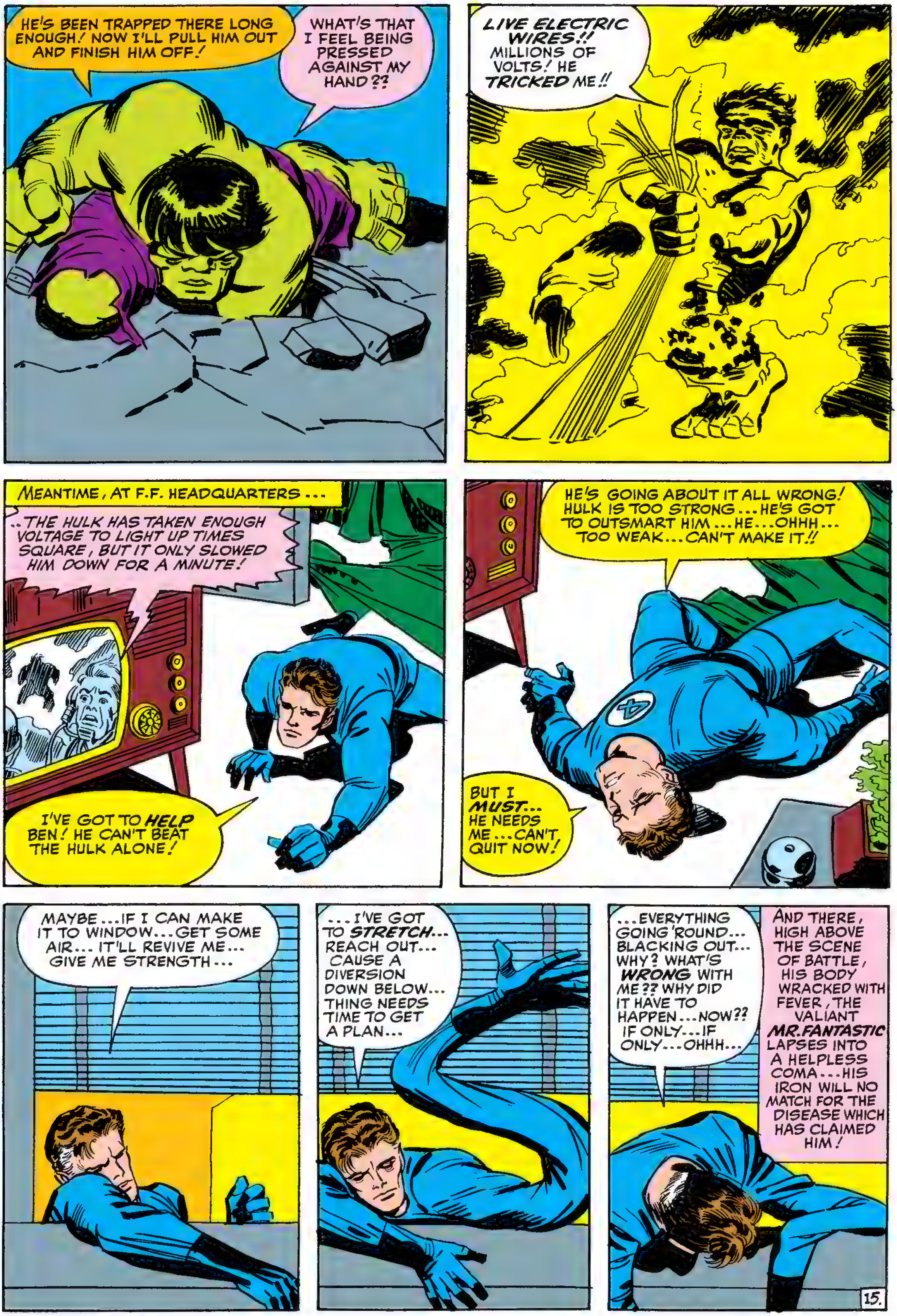

HOLY SMOKE!! I BETTER JUMP OFF HERE BEFORE THAT NUT WRECKS THE WHOLE BLAMED BUILDING!!

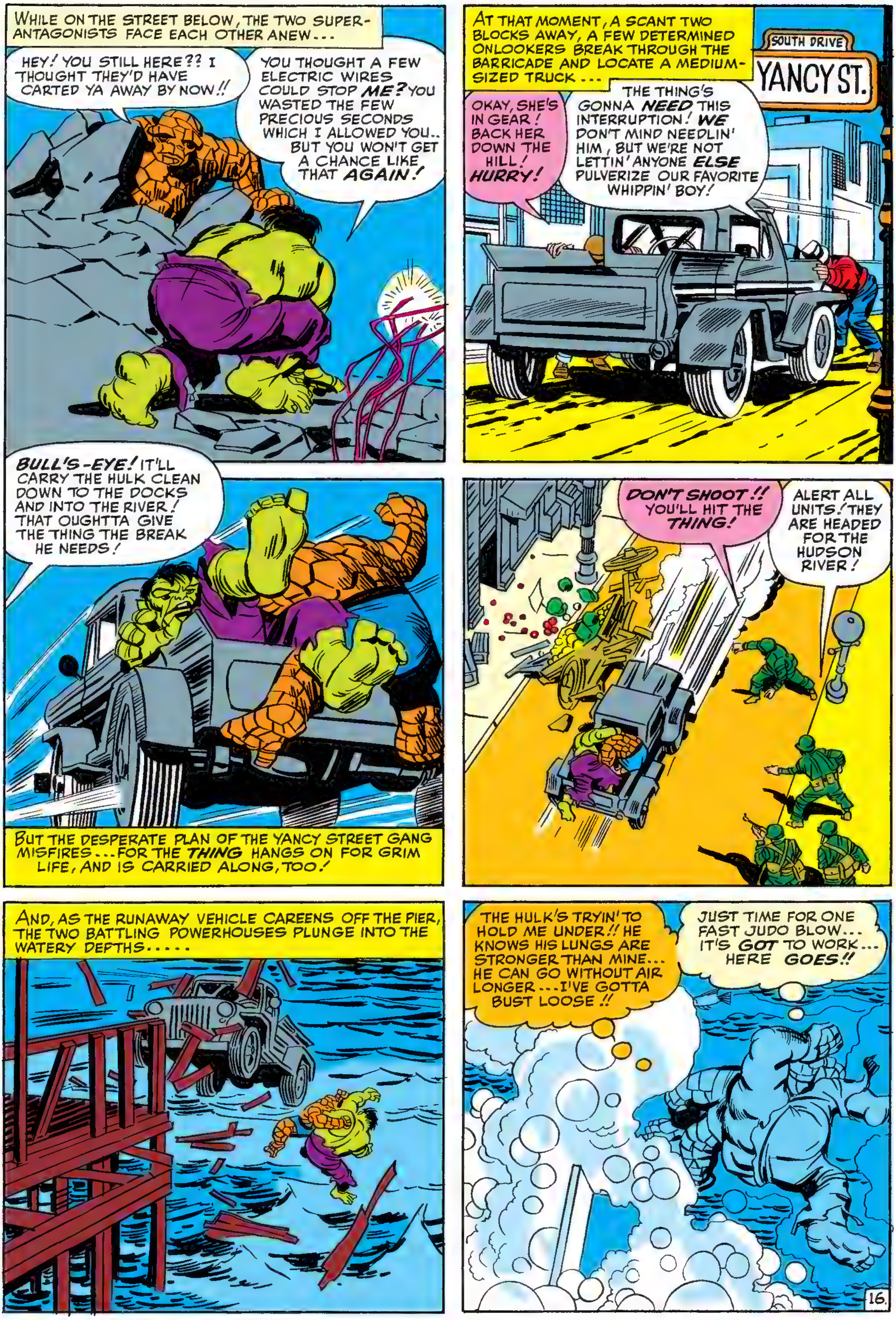

OKAY, MELVIN! IF YOU WANT ME, JUST STAY WHERE YOU ARE!!
GERONIMO!

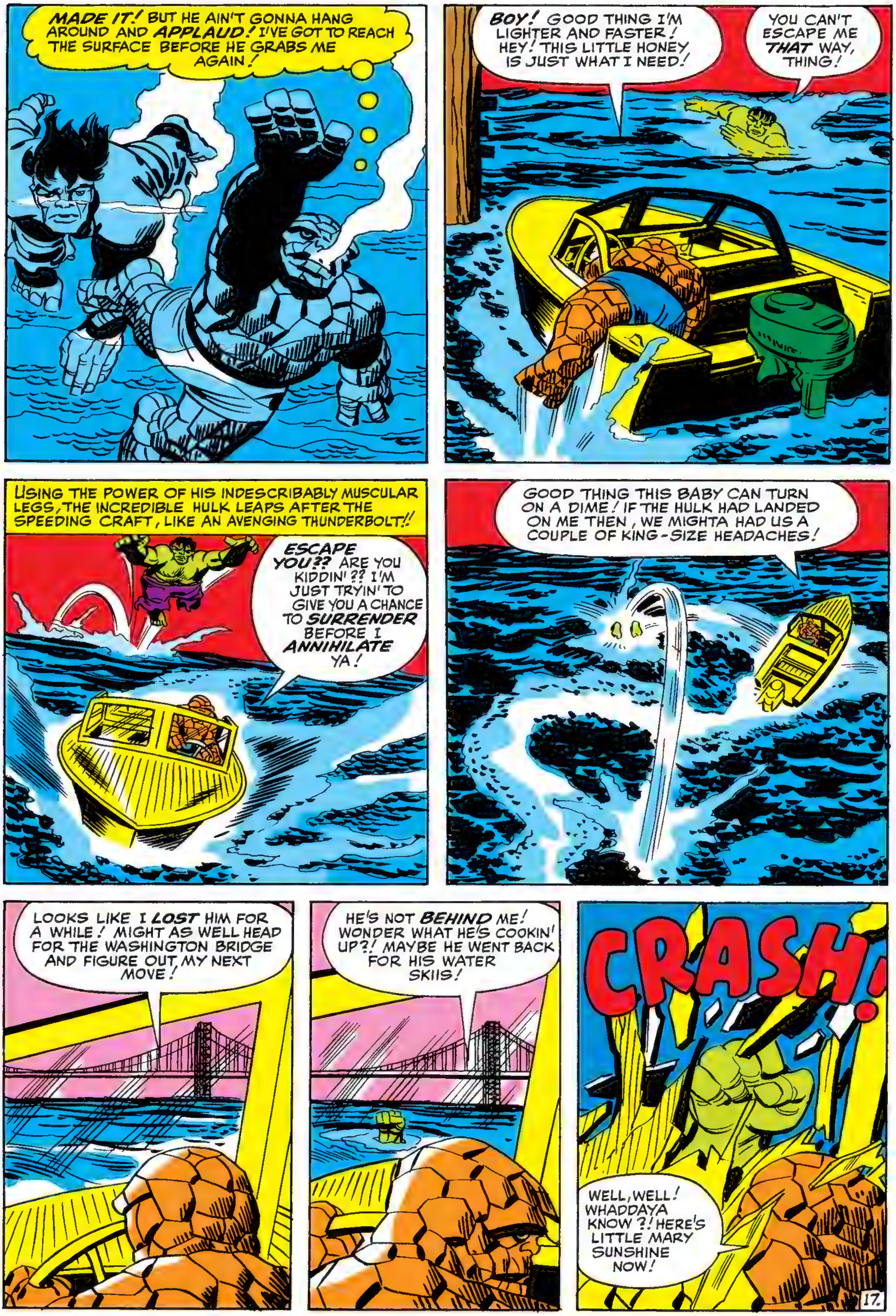

BUT, AT THE LAST SPLIT-SECOND, THE INCREDIBLE HULK STEPS BACK, WHILE HE LASHES OUT WITH HIS TWO MIGHTY ARMS, CATCHING THE THING BEFORE HE CAN STRIKE THE GROUND!
DID YOU THINK I'D LET YOU LAND ON ME?? NO... I HAVE OTHER PLANS FOR YOU!

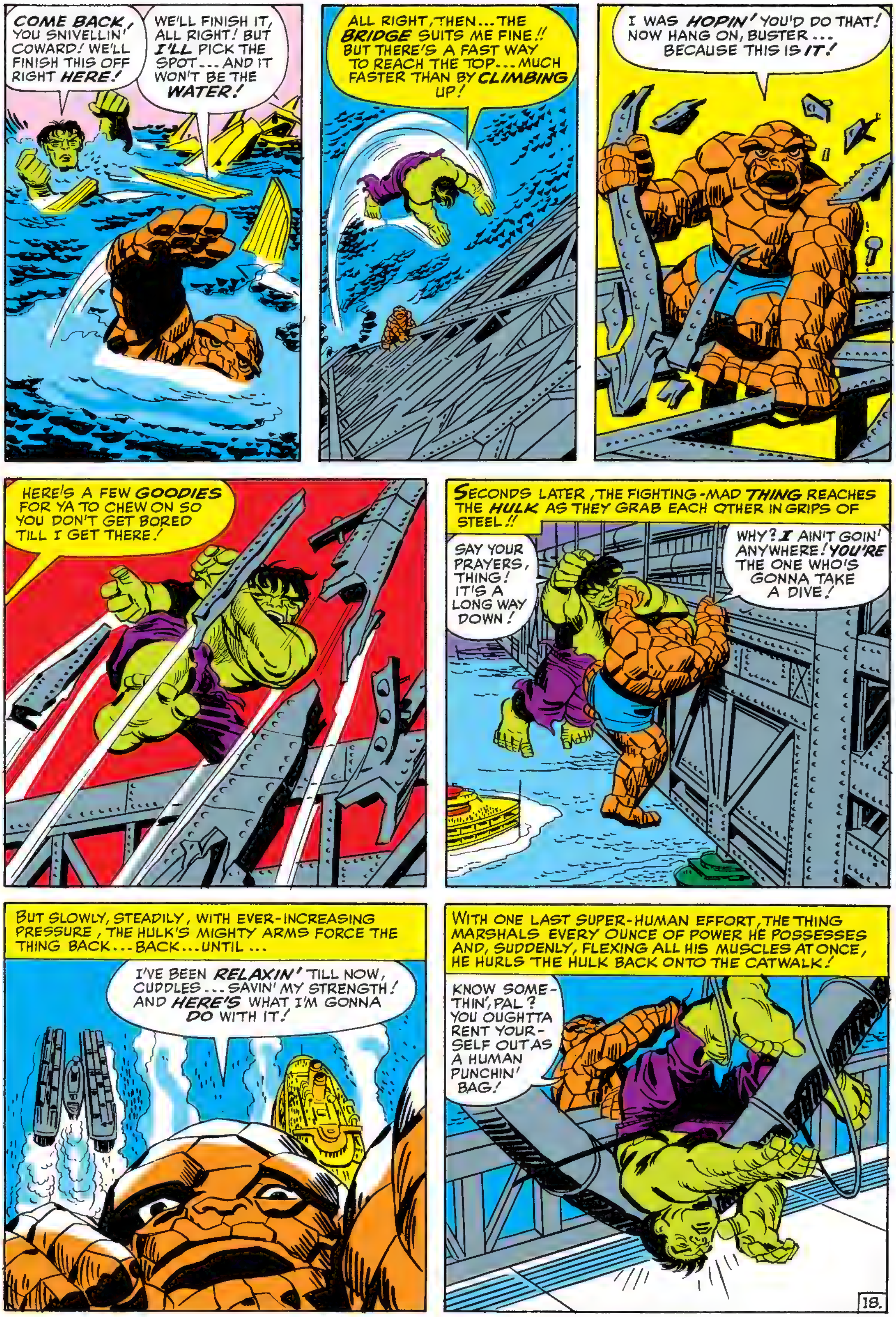

FIRST, I'LL DROP YOU INTO THIS MANHOLE... AND IF IT'S TOO TIGHT A FIT, I'LL JUST FORCE YOU IN... LIKE THIS!
WHAM!

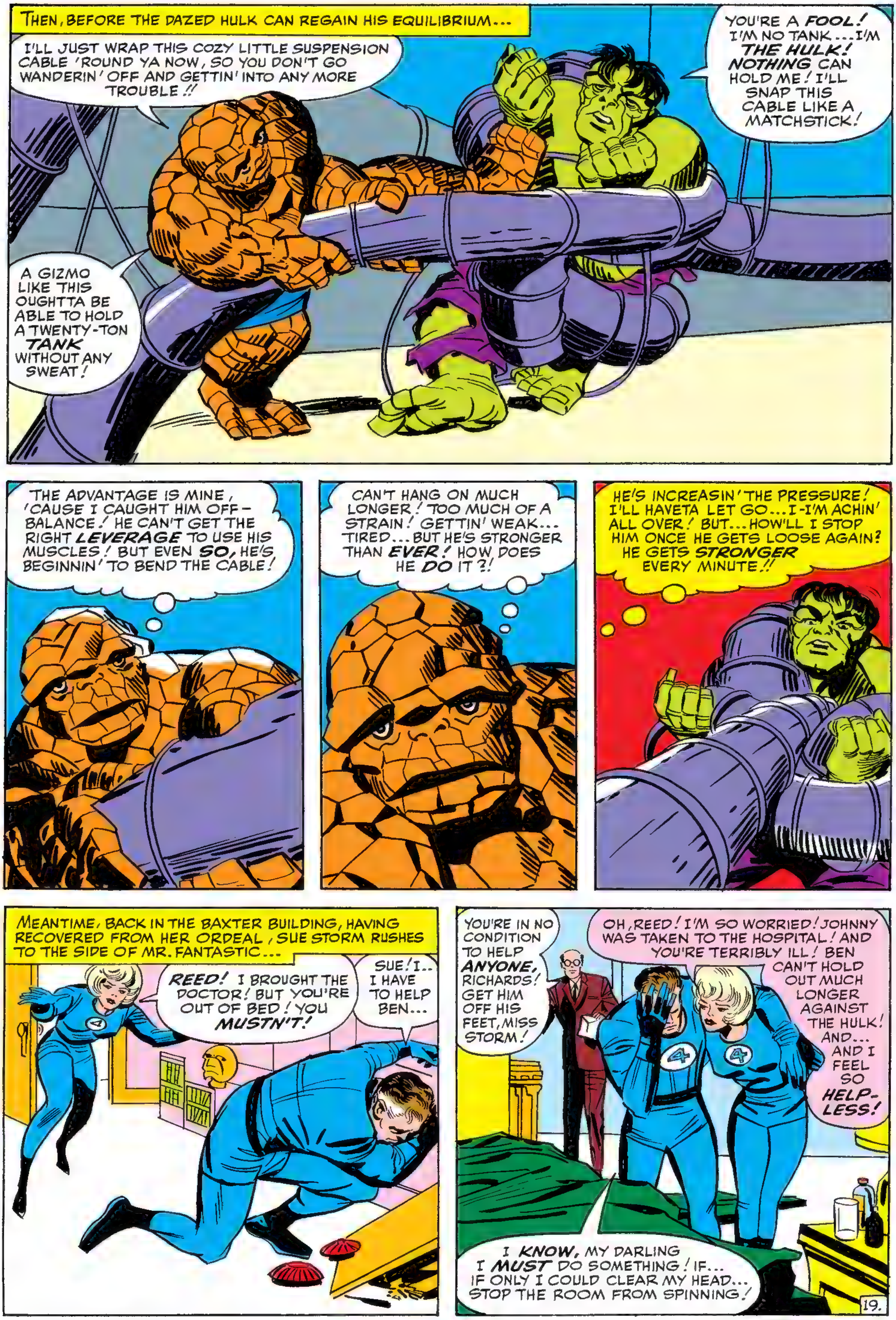

HAH!! IT'S THE BEST THING HE COULDA DONE! I'LL JUST GRAB A HANDFUL OF ELECTRIC CABLES AND YANK 'EM OUT!!

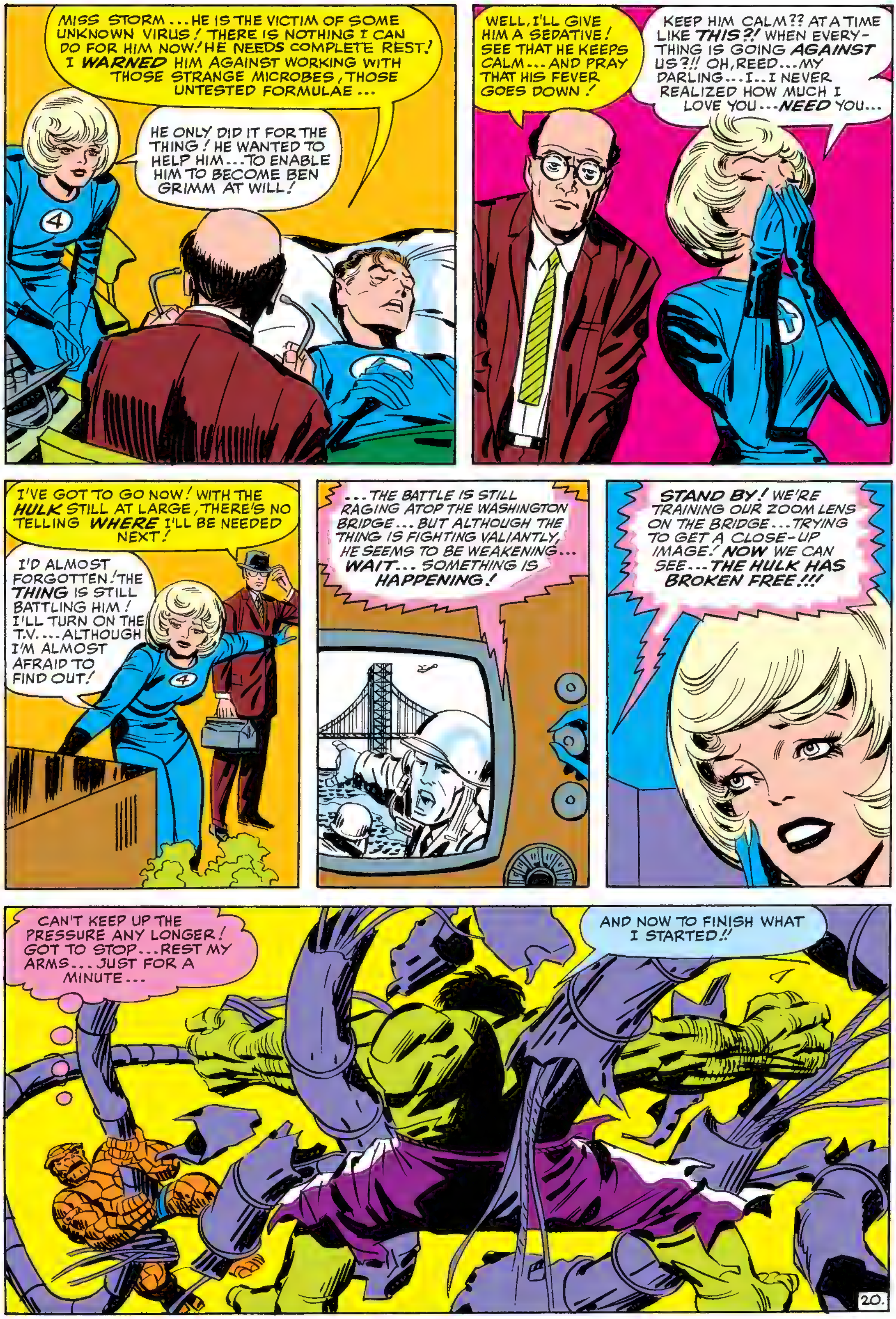

HE'S BEEN TRAPPED THERE LONG ENOUGH! NOW I'LL PULL HIM OUT AND FINISH HIM OFF!
WHAT'S THAT I FEEL BEING PRESSED AGAINST MY HAND??
LIVE ELECTRIC WIRES!! MILLIONS OF VOLTS! HE TRICKED ME!!
MEANTIME, AT F.F. HEADQUARTERS ...
..THE HULK HAS TAKEN ENOUGH VOLTAGE TO LIGHT UP TIMES SQUARE, BUT IT ONLY SLOWED HIM DOWN FOR A MINUTE!
I'VE GOT TO HELP BEN! HE CAN'T BEAT THE HULK ALONE!
HE'S GOING ABOUT IT ALL WRONG! HULK IS TOO STRONG ... HE'S GOT TO OUTSMART HIM ... HE ... OHHH ... TOO WEAK ... CAN'T MAKE IT!!
BUT I MUST... HE NEEDS ME ... CAN'T QUIT NOW!
MAYBE ... IF I CAN MAKE IT TO WINDOW ... GET SOME AIR ... IT'LL REVIVE ME ... GIVE ME STRENGTH ...
... I'VE GOT TO STRETCH... REACH OUT... CAUSE A DIVERSION DOWN BELOW... THING NEEDS TIME TO GET A PLAN...
... EVERYTHING GOING 'ROUND... BLACKING OUT... WHY? WHAT'S WRONG WITH ME?? WHY DID IT HAVE TO HAPPEN ... NOW?? IF ONLY ... IF ONLY ... OHHH...
AND THERE, HIGH ABOVE THE SCENE OF BATTLE, HIS BODY WRACKED WITH FEVER, THE VALIANT MR. FANTASTIC LAPSES INTO A HELPLESS COMA ... HIS IRON WILL NO MATCH FOR THE DISEASE WHICH HAS CLAIMED HIM!

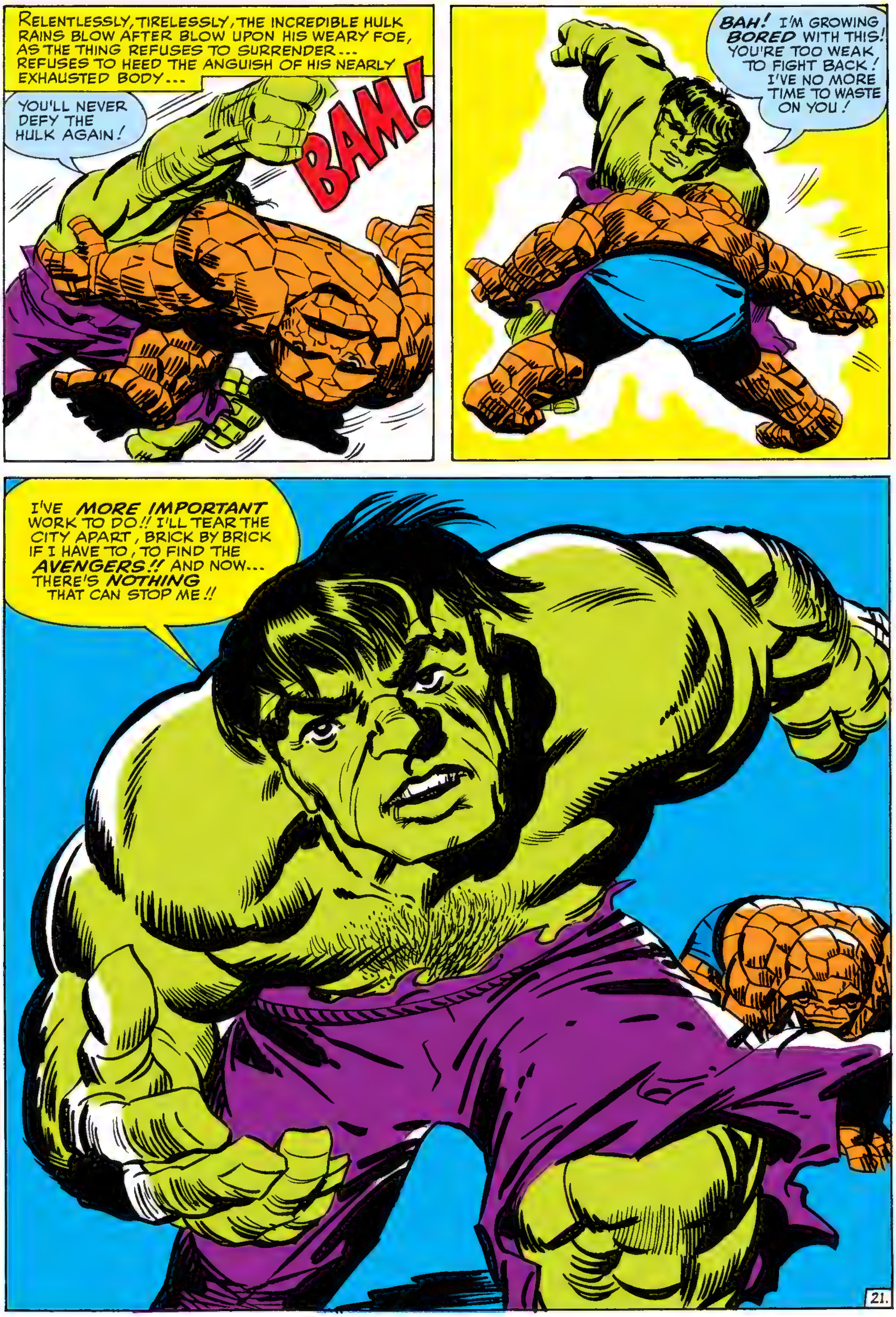

WHILE ON THE STREET BELOW, THE TWO SUPER-ANTAGONISTS FACE EACH OTHER ANEW...
HEY! YOU STILL HERE?? I THOUGHT THEY'D HAVE CARTED YA AWAY BY NOW!!
YOU THOUGHT A FEW ELECTRIC WIRES COULD STOP **ME?** YOU WASTED THE FEW PRECIOUS SECONDS WHICH I ALLOWED YOU.. BUT YOU WON'T GET A CHANCE LIKE THAT **AGAIN!**
AT THAT MOMENT, A SCANT TWO BLOCKS AWAY, A FEW DETERMINED ONLOOKERS BREAK THROUGH THE BARRICADE AND LOCATE A MEDIUM-SIZED TRUCK...
SOUTH DRIVE
YANCY ST.
OKAY, SHE'S IN GEAR! BACK HER DOWN THE HILL! **HURRY!**
THE THING'S GONNA **NEED** THIS INTERRUPTION! **WE** DON'T MIND NEEDLIN' HIM, BUT WE'RE NOT LETTIN' ANYONE **ELSE** PULVERIZE OUR FAVORITE WHIPPIN' BOY!
BULL'S-EYE! IT'LL CARRY THE HULK CLEAN DOWN TO THE DOCKS AND INTO THE RIVER! THAT OUGHTTA GIVE THE THING THE BREAK HE NEEDS!
BUT THE DESPERATE PLAN OF THE YANCY STREET GANG MISFIRES...FOR THE **THING** HANGS ON FOR GRIM LIFE, AND IS CARRIED ALONG, TOO!
DON'T SHOOT!! YOU'LL HIT THE **THING!**
ALERT ALL UNITS! THEY ARE HEADED FOR THE HUDSON RIVER!
AND, AS THE RUNAWAY VEHICLE CAREENS OFF THE PIER, THE TWO BATTLING POWERHOUSES PLUNGE INTO THE WATERY DEPTHS.....
THE HULK'S TRYIN' TO HOLD ME UNDER!! HE KNOWS HIS LUNGS ARE STRONGER THAN MINE... HE CAN GO WITHOUT AIR LONGER...I'VE GOTTA BUST LOOSE!!
JUST TIME FOR ONE FAST JUDO BLOW... IT'S **GOT** TO WORK... HERE **GOES!!**

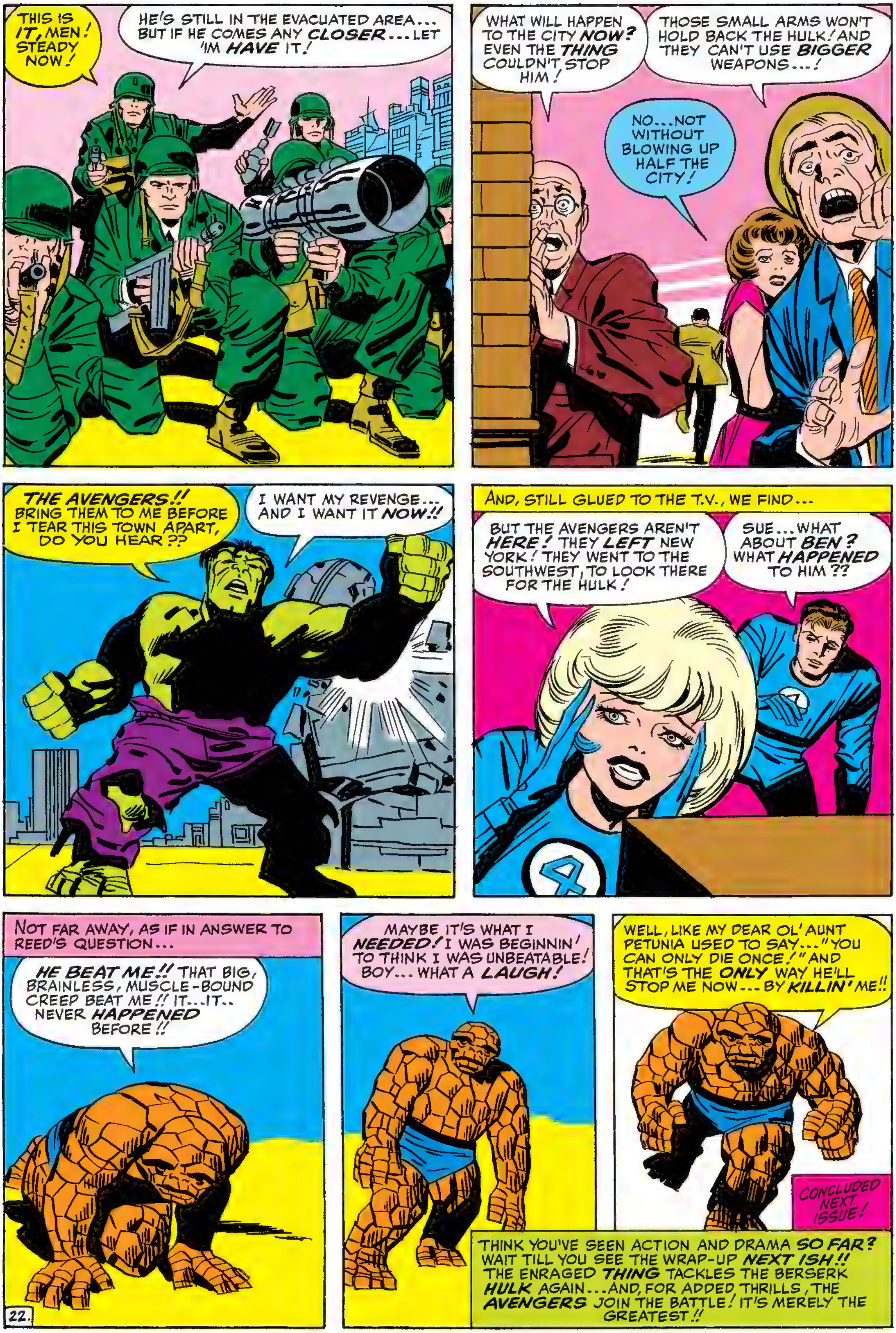

MADE IT! BUT HE AIN'T GONNA HANG AROUND AND APPLAUD! I'VE GOT TO REACH THE SURFACE BEFORE HE GRABS ME AGAIN!
BOY! GOOD THING I'M LIGHTER AND FASTER! HEY! THIS LITTLE HONEY IS JUST WHAT I NEED!
YOU CAN'T ESCAPE ME THAT WAY, THING!
USING THE POWER OF HIS INDESCRIBABLY MUSCULAR LEGS, THE INCREDIBLE HULK LEAPS AFTER THE SPEEDING CRAFT, LIKE AN AVENGING THUNDERBOLT!!
ESCAPE YOU?? ARE YOU KIDDIN'?? I'M JUST TRYIN' TO GIVE YOU A CHANCE TO SURRENDER BEFORE I ANNIHILATE YA!
GOOD THING THIS BABY CAN TURN ON A DIME! IF THE HULK HAD LANDED ON ME THEN, WE MIGHTA HAD US A COUPLE OF KING-SIZE HEADACHES!
LOOKS LIKE I LOST HIM FOR A WHILE! MIGHT AS WELL HEAD FOR THE WASHINGTON BRIDGE AND FIGURE OUT MY NEXT MOVE!
HE'S NOT BEHIND ME! WONDER WHAT HE'S COOKIN' UP?! MAYBE HE WENT BACK FOR HIS WATER SKIIS!
CRASH!
WELL, WELL! WHADDAYA KNOW?! HERE'S LITTLE MARY SUNSHINE NOW!


COME BACK, YOU SNIVELLIN' COWARD! WE'LL FINISH THIS OFF RIGHT HERE!
WE'LL FINISH IT, ALL RIGHT! BUT I'LL PICK THE SPOT... AND IT WON'T BE THE WATER!
ALL RIGHT, THEN... THE BRIDGE SUITS ME FINE!! BUT THERE'S A FAST WAY TO REACH THE TOP... MUCH FASTER THAN BY CLIMBING UP!
I WAS HOPIN' YOU'D DO THAT! NOW HANG ON, BUSTER... BECAUSE THIS IS IT!
HERE'S A FEW GOODIES FOR YA TO CHEW ON SO YOU DON'T GET BORED TILL I GET THERE!
SECONDS LATER, THE FIGHTING-MAD THING REACHES THE HULK AS THEY GRAB EACH OTHER IN GRIPS OF STEEL!!
SAY YOUR PRAYERS, THING! IT'S A LONG WAY DOWN!
WHY? I AIN'T GOIN' ANYWHERE! YOU'RE THE ONE WHO'S GONNA TAKE A DIVE!
BUT SLOWLY, STEADILY, WITH EVER-INCREASING PRESSURE, THE HULK'S MIGHTY ARMS FORCE THE THING BACK... BACK... UNTIL...
I'VE BEEN RELAXIN' TILL NOW, CUDDLES... SAVIN' MY STRENGTH! AND HERE'S WHAT I'M GONNA DO WITH IT!
WITH ONE LAST SUPER-HUMAN EFFORT, THE THING MARSHALS EVERY OUNCE OF POWER HE POSSESSES AND, SUDDENLY, FLEXING ALL HIS MUSCLES AT ONCE, HE HURLS THE HULK BACK ONTO THE CATWALK!
KNOW SOMETHIN', PAL? YOU OUGHTTA RENT YOURSELF OUT AS A HUMAN PUNCHIN' BAG!


THEN, BEFORE THE DAZED HULK CAN REGAIN HIS EQUILIBRIUM...
I'LL JUST WRAP THIS COZY LITTLE SUSPENSION CABLE 'ROUND YA NOW, SO YOU DON'T GO WANDERIN' OFF AND GETTIN' INTO ANY MORE TROUBLE !!
YOU'RE A FOOL! I'M NO TANK...I'M THE HULK! NOTHING CAN HOLD ME! I'LL SNAP THIS CABLE LIKE A MATCHSTICK!
A GIZMO LIKE THIS OUGHTTA BE ABLE TO HOLD A TWENTY-TON TANK WITHOUT ANY SWEAT!
THE ADVANTAGE IS MINE, 'CAUSE I CAUGHT HIM OFF-BALANCE! HE CAN'T GET THE RIGHT LEVERAGE TO USE HIS MUSCLES! BUT EVEN SO, HE'S BEGINNIN' TO BEND THE CABLE!
CAN'T HANG ON MUCH LONGER! TOO MUCH OF A STRAIN! GETTIN' WEAK... TIRED... BUT HE'S STRONGER THAN EVER! HOW DOES HE DO IT ?!
HE'S INCREASIN' THE PRESSURE! I'LL HAVETA LET GO... I-I'M ACHIN' ALL OVER! BUT... HOW'LL I STOP HIM ONCE HE GETS LOOSE AGAIN? HE GETS STRONGER EVERY MINUTE!!
MEANTIME, BACK IN THE BAXTER BUILDING, HAVING RECOVERED FROM HER ORDEAL, SUE STORM RUSHES TO THE SIDE OF MR. FANTASTIC...
REED! I BROUGHT THE DOCTOR! BUT YOU'RE OUT OF BED! YOU MUSTN'T!
SUE! I.. I HAVE TO HELP BEN...
YOU'RE IN NO CONDITION TO HELP ANYONE, RICHARDS! GET HIM OFF HIS FEET, MISS STORM!
OH, REED! I'M SO WORRIED! JOHNNY WAS TAKEN TO THE HOSPITAL! AND YOU'RE TERRIBLY ILL! BEN CAN'T HOLD OUT MUCH LONGER AGAINST THE HULK! AND... AND I FEEL SO HELPLESS!
I KNOW, MY DARLING I MUST DO SOMETHING! IF... IF ONLY I COULD CLEAR MY HEAD... STOP THE ROOM FROM SPINNING!


MISS STORM... HE IS THE VICTIM OF SOME UNKNOWN VIRUS! THERE IS NOTHING I CAN DO FOR HIM NOW! HE NEEDS COMPLETE REST! I **WARNED** HIM AGAINST WORKING WITH THOSE STRANGE MICROBES, THOSE UNTESTED FORMULAE...
HE ONLY DID IT FOR THE THING! HE WANTED TO HELP HIM... TO ENABLE HIM TO BECOME BEN GRIMM AT WILL!
WELL, I'LL GIVE HIM A SEDATIVE! SEE THAT HE KEEPS CALM... AND PRAY THAT HIS FEVER GOES DOWN!
KEEP HIM CALM?? AT A TIME LIKE ***THIS?!*** WHEN EVERYTHING IS GOING ***AGAINST*** US?!! OH, REED... MY DARLING... I.. I NEVER REALIZED HOW MUCH I LOVE YOU... ***NEED*** YOU...
I'VE GOT TO GO NOW! WITH THE ***HULK*** STILL AT LARGE, THERE'S NO TELLING ***WHERE*** I'LL BE NEEDED NEXT!
I'D ALMOST FORGOTTEN! THE ***THING*** IS STILL BATTLING HIM! I'LL TURN ON THE T.V.... ALTHOUGH I'M ALMOST AFRAID TO FIND OUT!
...THE BATTLE IS STILL RAGING ATOP THE WASHINGTON BRIDGE... BUT ALTHOUGH THE THING IS FIGHTING VALIANTLY, HE SEEMS TO BE WEAKENING... ***WAIT...*** SOMETHING IS ***HAPPENING!***
STAND BY! WE'RE TRAINING OUR ZOOM LENS ON THE BRIDGE... TRYING TO GET A CLOSE-UP IMAGE! ***NOW*** WE CAN SEE... ***THE HULK HAS BROKEN FREE!!!***
CAN'T KEEP UP THE PRESSURE ANY LONGER! GOT TO STOP... REST MY ARMS... JUST FOR A MINUTE...
AND NOW TO FINISH WHAT I STARTED!!


RELENTLESSLY, TIRELESSLY, THE INCREDIBLE HULK RAINS BLOW AFTER BLOW UPON HIS WEARY FOE, AS THE THING REFUSES TO SURRENDER... REFUSES TO HEED THE ANGUISH OF HIS NEARLY EXHAUSTED BODY...
YOU'LL NEVER DEFY THE HULK AGAIN!
BAM!
BAH! I'M GROWING BORED WITH THIS! YOU'RE TOO WEAK TO FIGHT BACK! I'VE NO MORE TIME TO WASTE ON YOU!
I'VE MORE IMPORTANT WORK TO DO!! I'LL TEAR THE CITY APART, BRICK BY BRICK IF I HAVE TO, TO FIND THE AVENGERS!! AND NOW... THERE'S NOTHING THAT CAN STOP ME!!


THIS IS *IT*, MEN! STEADY NOW!
HE'S STILL IN THE EVACUATED AREA... BUT IF HE COMES ANY *CLOSER*... LET 'IM *HAVE* IT!
WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO THE CITY *NOW?* EVEN THE *THING* COULDN'T STOP HIM!
THOSE SMALL ARMS WON'T HOLD BACK THE HULK! AND THEY CAN'T USE *BIGGER* WEAPONS...!
NO...NOT WITHOUT BLOWING UP HALF THE CITY!
THE AVENGERS!! BRING THEM TO ME BEFORE I TEAR THIS TOWN APART, DO YOU HEAR??
I WANT MY REVENGE... AND I WANT IT *NOW!!*
AND, STILL GLUED TO THE T.V., WE FIND...
BUT THE AVENGERS AREN'T *HERE!* THEY *LEFT* NEW YORK! THEY WENT TO THE SOUTHWEST, TO LOOK THERE FOR THE HULK!
SUE...WHAT ABOUT *BEN?* WHAT *HAPPENED* TO HIM??
NOT FAR AWAY, AS IF IN ANSWER TO REED'S QUESTION...
HE BEAT ME!! THAT BIG, BRAINLESS, MUSCLE-BOUND CREEP BEAT ME!! IT...IT.. NEVER *HAPPENED* BEFORE!!
MAYBE IT'S WHAT I *NEEDED!* I WAS BEGINNIN' TO THINK I WAS UNBEATABLE! BOY... WHAT A *LAUGH!*
WELL, LIKE MY DEAR OL' AUNT PETUNIA USED TO SAY... "YOU CAN ONLY DIE ONCE!" AND THAT'S THE *ONLY* WAY HE'LL STOP ME NOW... BY *KILLIN'* ME!!
CONCLUDED NEXT ISSUE!
THINK YOU'VE SEEN ACTION AND DRAMA *SO FAR?* WAIT TILL YOU SEE THE WRAP-UP *NEXT ISH!!* THE ENRAGED *THING* TACKLES THE BERSERK *HULK* AGAIN...AND, FOR ADDED THRILLS, THE *AVENGERS* JOIN THE BATTLE! IT'S MERELY THE GREATEST!!

THE WORLD'S GREATEST COMIC MAGAZINE!
Fantastic Four
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
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"THE AVENGERS TAKE OVER!"
DON'T MISS THE GREAT CONCLUSION OF THE EPIC BATTLE BETWEEN THE THING and THE HULK!
FEATURING A GALAXY OF THE WORLD'S MOST THRILLING GUEST STARS!

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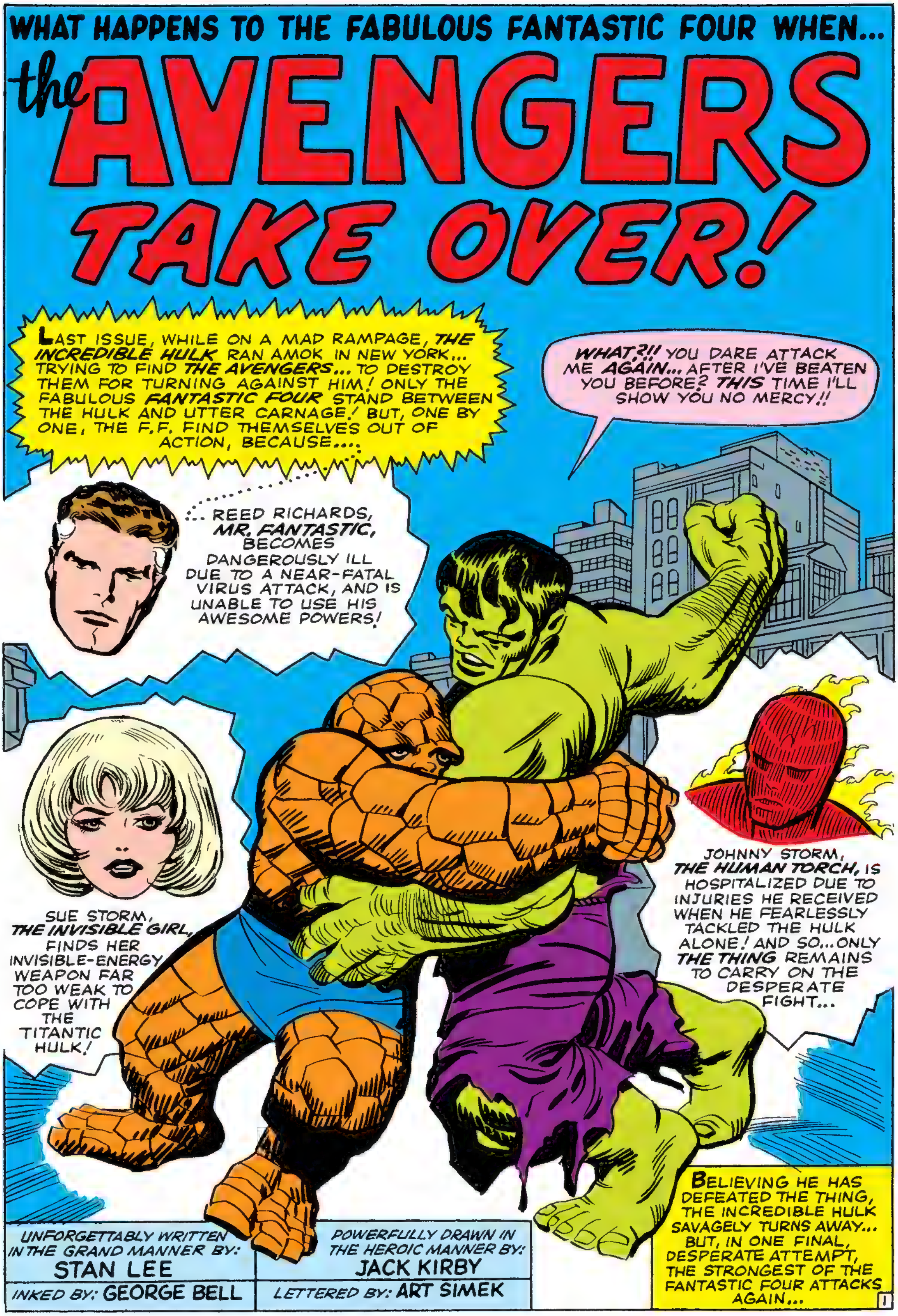
WHAT HAPPENS TO THE FABULOUS FANTASTIC FOUR WHEN...
the AVENGERS TAKE OVER!
LAST ISSUE, WHILE ON A MAD RAMPAGE, THE INCREDIBLE HULK RAN AMOK IN NEW YORK... TRYING TO FIND THE AVENGERS... TO DESTROY THEM FOR TURNING AGAINST HIM! ONLY THE FABULOUS FANTASTIC FOUR STAND BETWEEN THE HULK AND UTTER CARNAGE! BUT, ONE BY ONE, THE F.F. FIND THEMSELVES OUT OF ACTION, BECAUSE....
WHAT?!! YOU DARE ATTACK ME AGAIN... AFTER I'VE BEATEN YOU BEFORE? THIS TIME I'LL SHOW YOU NO MERCY!!
...REED RICHARDS, MR. FANTASTIC, BECOMES DANGEROUSLY ILL DUE TO A NEAR-FATAL VIRUS ATTACK, AND IS UNABLE TO USE HIS AWESOME POWERS!
SUE STORM, THE INVISIBLE GIRL, FINDS HER INVISIBLE-ENERGY WEAPON FAR TOO WEAK TO COPE WITH THE TITANTIC HULK!
JOHNNY STORM, THE HUMAN TORCH, IS HOSPITALIZED DUE TO INJURIES HE RECEIVED WHEN HE FEARLESSLY TACKLED THE HULK ALONE! AND SO...ONLY THE THING REMAINS TO CARRY ON THE DESPERATE FIGHT...
BELIEVING HE HAS DEFEATED THE THING, THE INCREDIBLE HULK SAVAGELY TURNS AWAY... BUT, IN ONE FINAL, DESPERATE ATTEMPT, THE STRONGEST OF THE FANTASTIC FOUR ATTACKS AGAIN...
UNFORGETTABLY WRITTEN IN THE GRAND MANNER BY: STAN LEE
POWERFULLY DRAWN IN THE HEROIC MANNER BY: JACK KIRBY
INKED BY: GEORGE BELL
LETTERED BY: ART SIMEK
1

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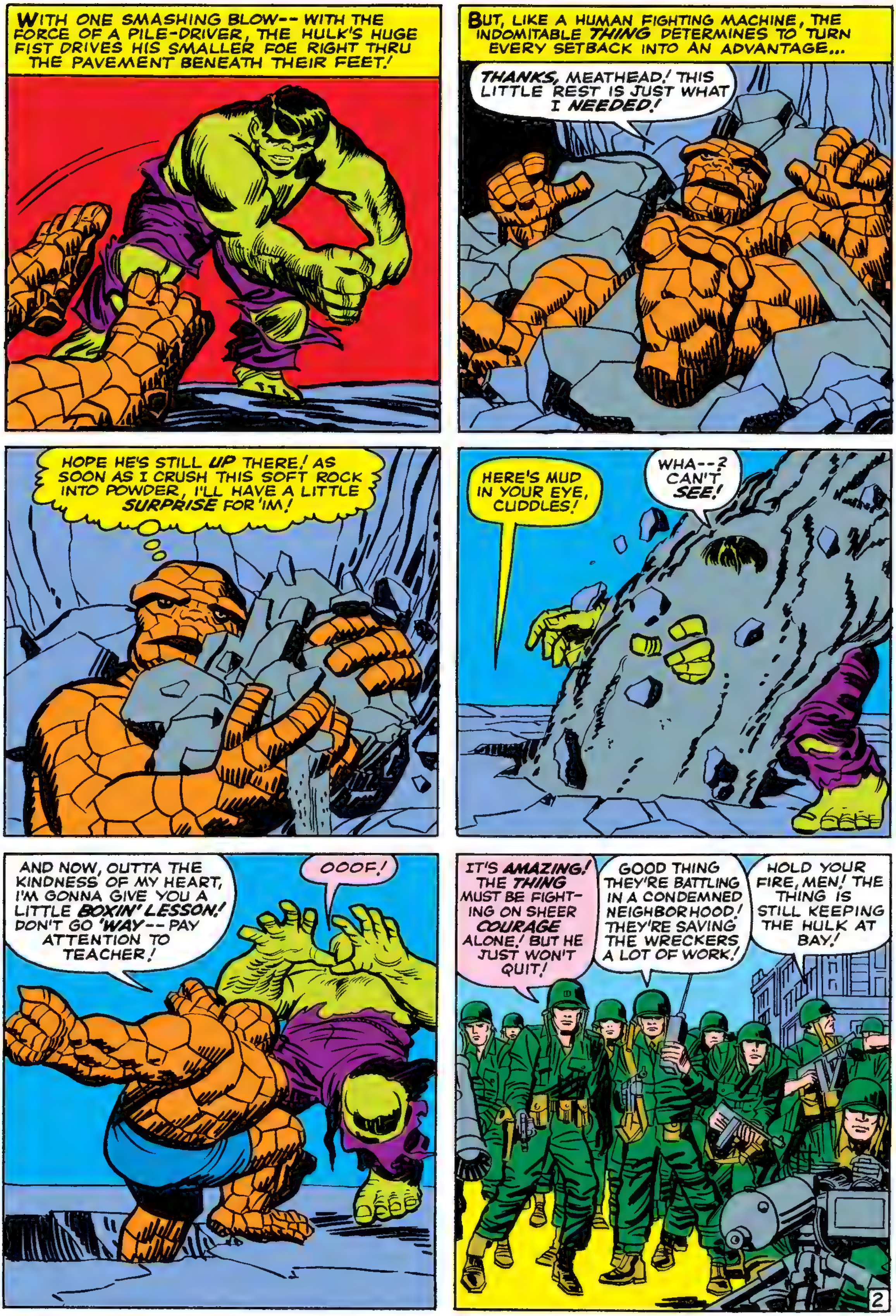
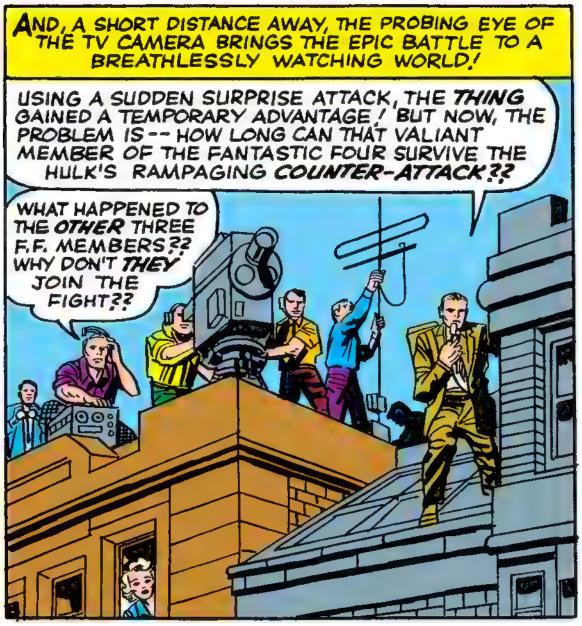
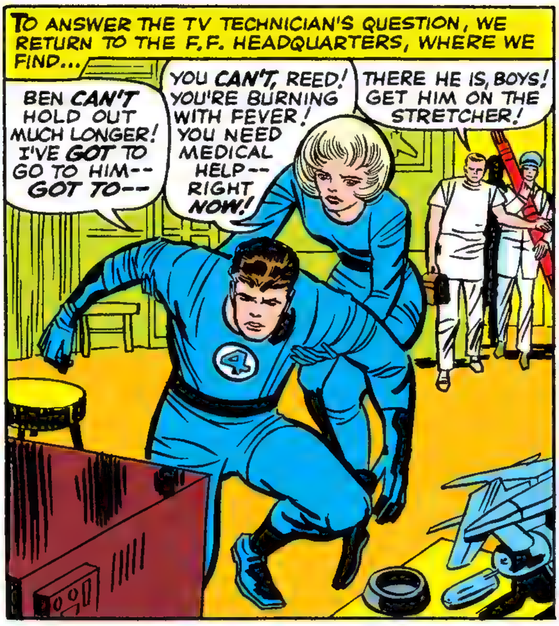
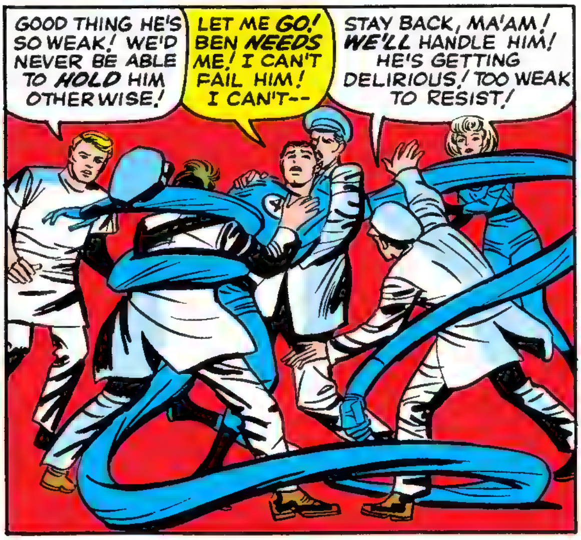
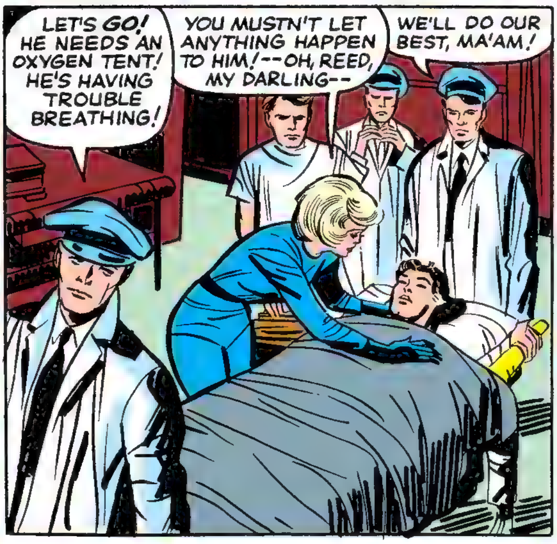
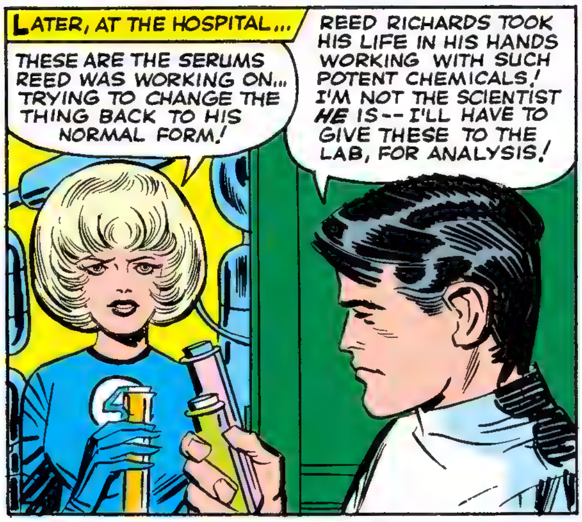

WITH ONE SMASHING BLOW-- WITH THE FORCE OF A PILE-DRIVER, THE HULK'S HUGE FIST DRIVES HIS SMALLER FOE RIGHT THRU THE PAVEMENT BENEATH THEIR FEET!
BUT, LIKE A HUMAN FIGHTING MACHINE, THE INDOMITABLE *THING* DETERMINES TO TURN EVERY SETBACK INTO AN ADVANTAGE...
THANKS, MEATHEAD! THIS LITTLE REST IS JUST WHAT I *NEEDED!*
HOPE HE'S STILL *UP* THERE! AS SOON AS I CRUSH THIS SOFT ROCK INTO POWDER, I'LL HAVE A LITTLE *SURPRISE* FOR 'IM!
HERE'S MUD IN YOUR EYE, CUDDLES!
WHA--? CAN'T *SEE!*
AND NOW, OUTTA THE KINDNESS OF MY HEART, I'M GONNA GIVE YOU A LITTLE *BOXIN' LESSON!* DON'T GO *'WAY*-- PAY ATTENTION TO TEACHER!
OOOF!
IT'S *AMAZING!* THE *THING* MUST BE FIGHTING ON SHEER *COURAGE* ALONE! BUT HE JUST WON'T QUIT!
GOOD THING THEY'RE BATTLING IN A CONDEMNED NEIGHBORHOOD! THEY'RE SAVING THE WRECKERS A LOT OF WORK!
HOLD YOUR FIRE, MEN! THE THING IS STILL KEEPING THE HULK AT BAY!

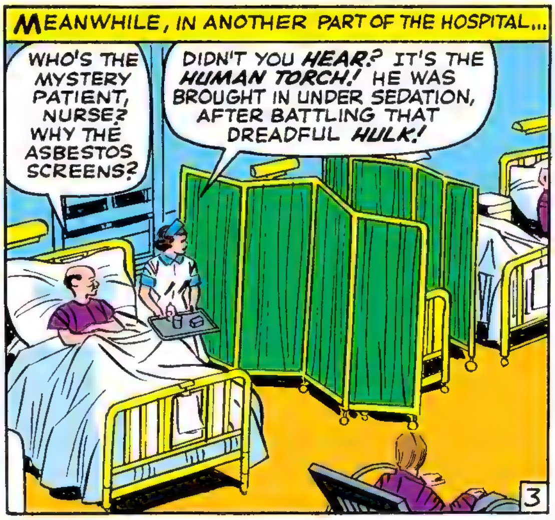

AND, A SHORT DISTANCE AWAY, THE PROBING EYE OF THE TV CAMERA BRINGS THE EPIC BATTLE TO A BREATHLESSLY WATCHING WORLD!
USING A SUDDEN SURPRISE ATTACK, THE *THING* GAINED A TEMPORARY ADVANTAGE! BUT NOW, THE PROBLEM IS-- HOW LONG CAN THAT VALIANT MEMBER OF THE FANTASTIC FOUR SURVIVE THE HULK'S RAMPAGING *COUNTER-ATTACK??*
WHAT HAPPENED TO THE *OTHER* THREE F.F. MEMBERS?? WHY DON'T *THEY* JOIN THE FIGHT??

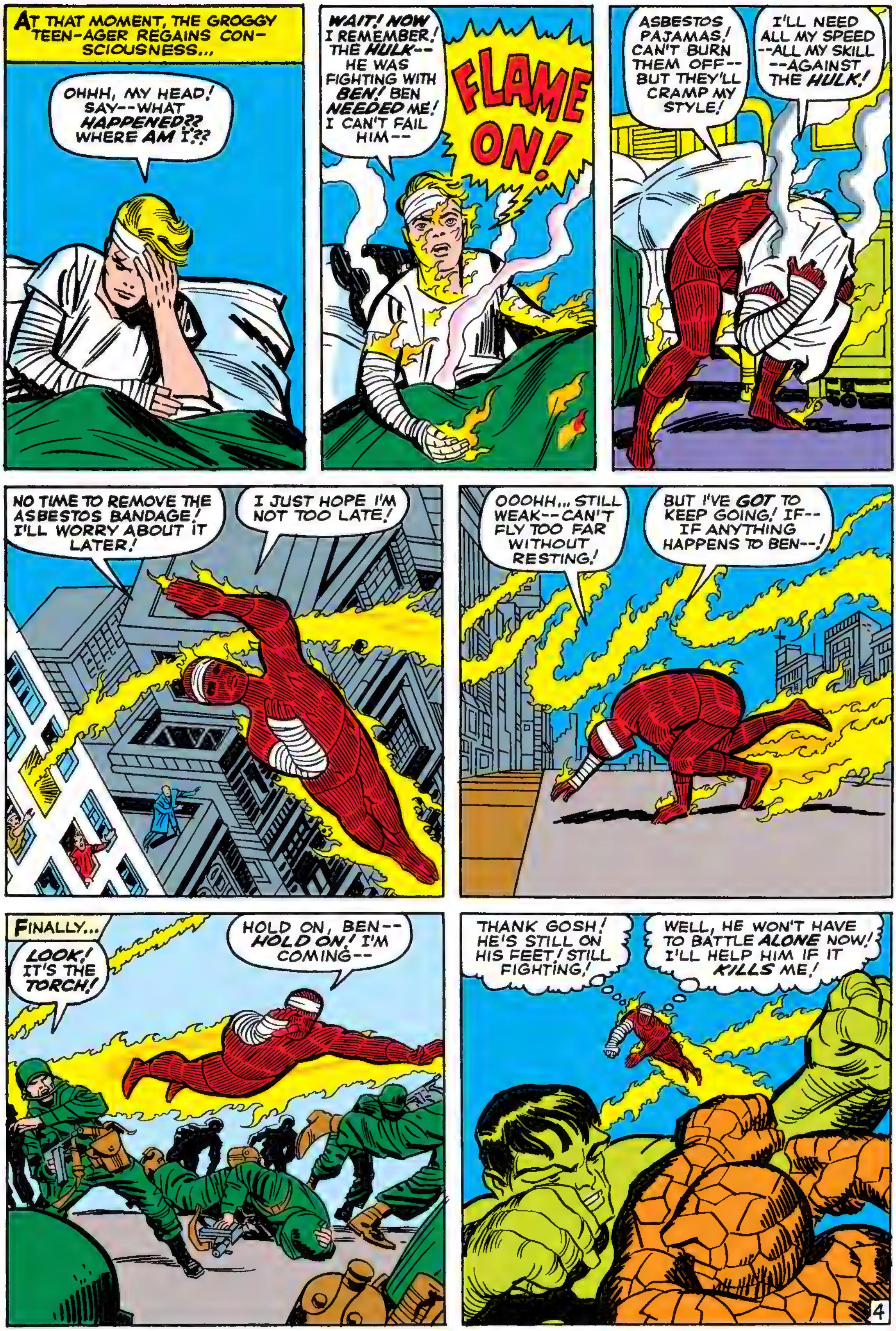

TO ANSWER THE TV TECHNICIAN'S QUESTION, WE RETURN TO THE F.F. HEADQUARTERS, WHERE WE FIND...
BEN *CAN'T* HOLD OUT MUCH LONGER! I'VE *GOT* TO GO TO HIM-- *GOT TO--*
YOU *CAN'T*, REED! YOU'RE BURNING WITH FEVER! YOU NEED MEDICAL HELP-- RIGHT *NOW!*
THERE HE IS, BOYS! GET HIM ON THE STRETCHER!

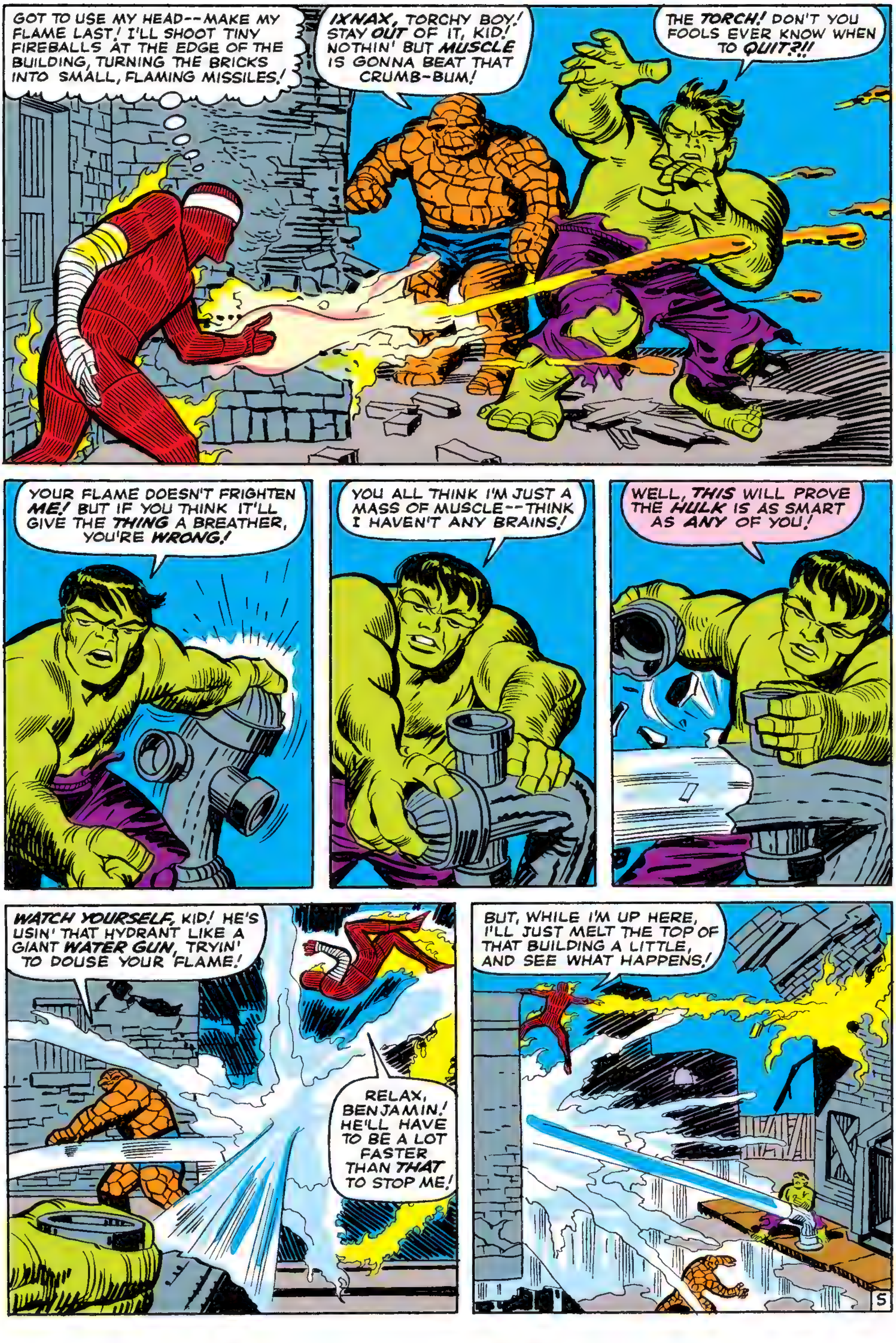

GOOD THING HE'S SO WEAK! WE'D NEVER BE ABLE TO *HOLD* HIM OTHERWISE!
LET ME *GO!* BEN *NEEDS* ME! I CAN'T FAIL HIM! I CAN'T--
STAY BACK, MA'AM! *WE'LL* HANDLE HIM! HE'S GETTING DELIRIOUS! TOO WEAK TO RESIST!

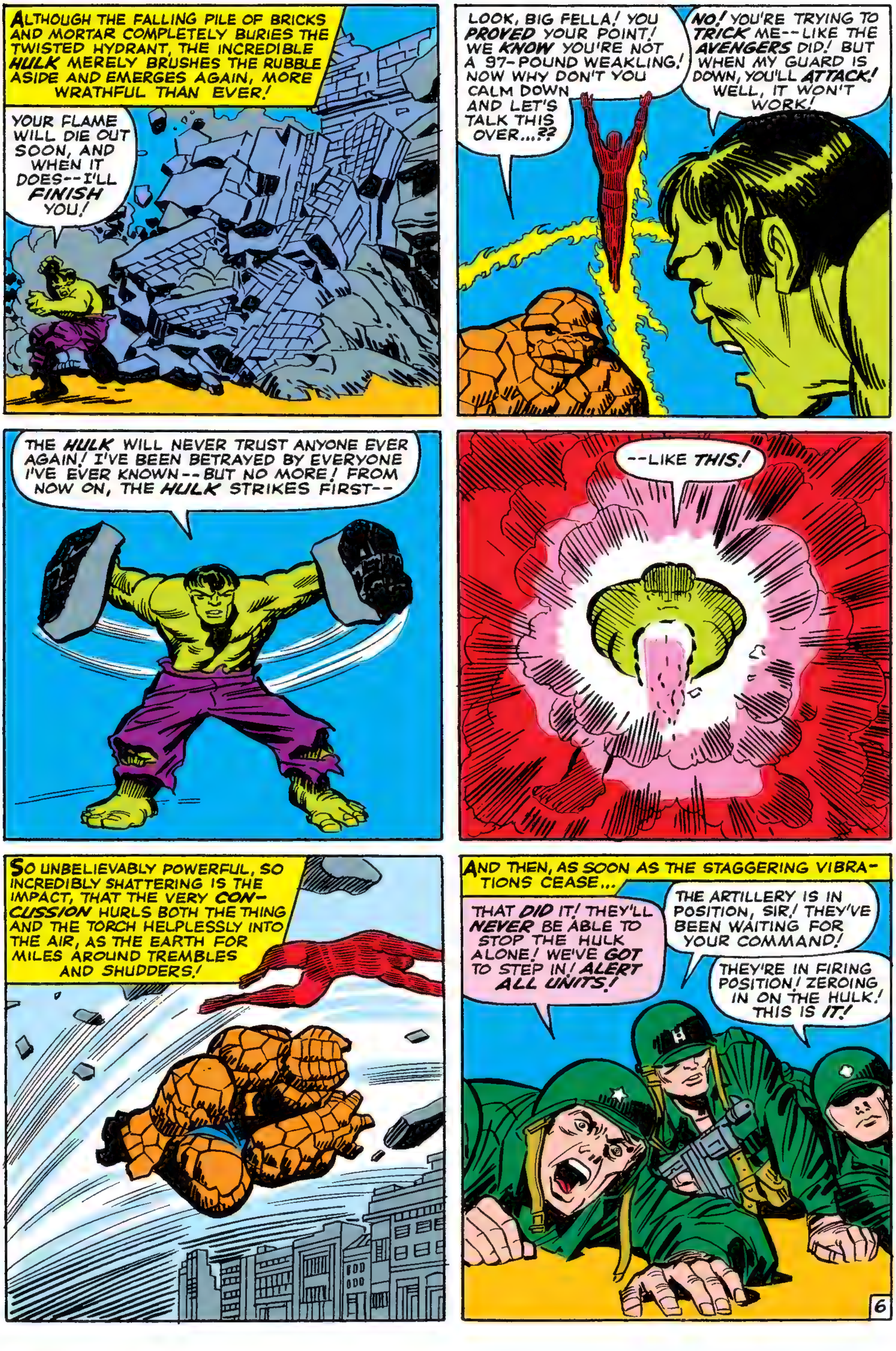

LET'S *GO!* HE NEEDS AN OXYGEN TENT! HE'S HAVING TROUBLE BREATHING!
YOU MUSTN'T LET ANYTHING HAPPEN TO HIM!--OH, REED, MY DARLING--
WE'LL DO OUR BEST, MA'AM!

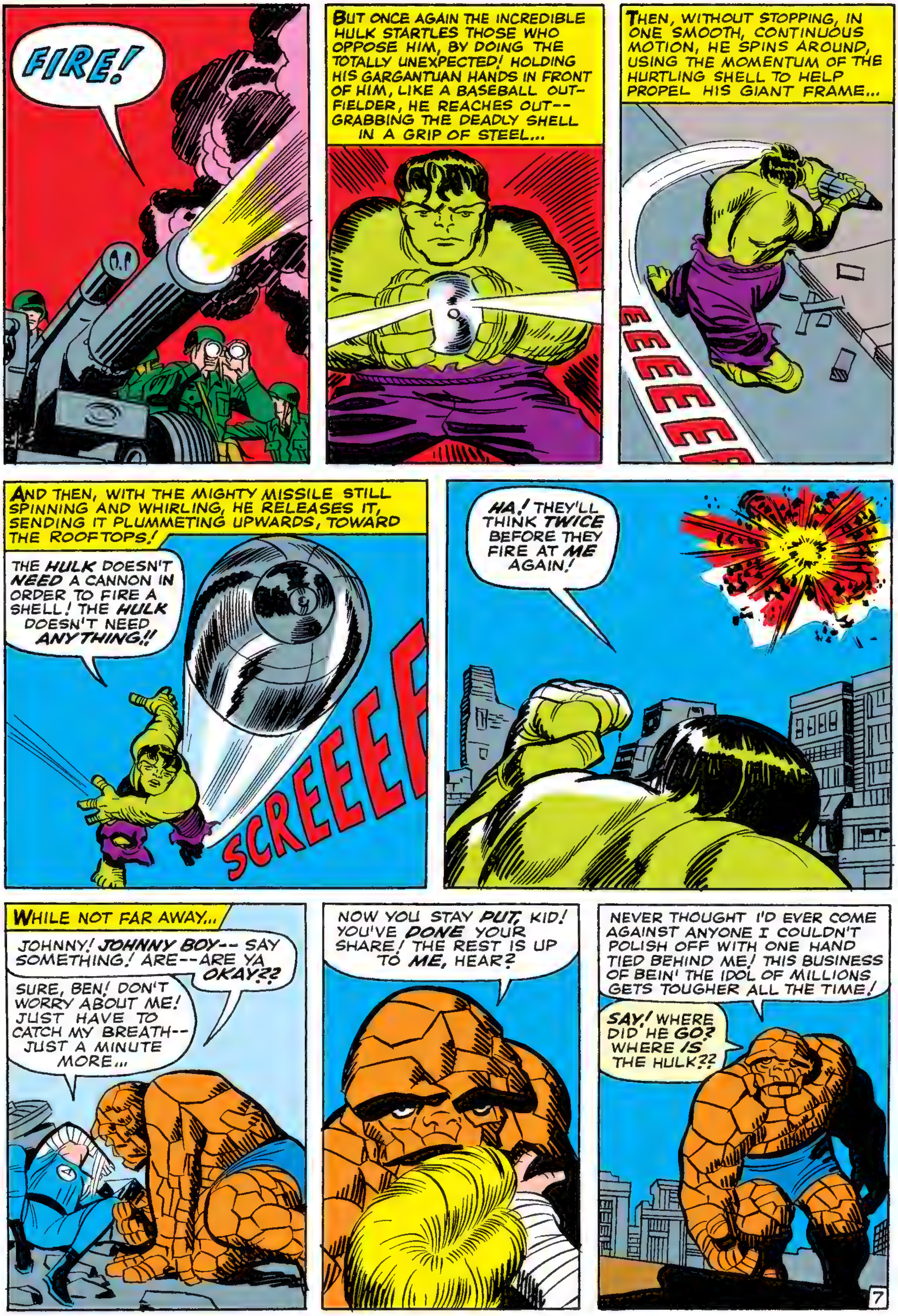

LATER, AT THE HOSPITAL...
THESE ARE THE SERUMS REED WAS WORKING ON... TRYING TO CHANGE THE THING BACK TO HIS NORMAL FORM!
REED RICHARDS TOOK HIS LIFE IN HIS HANDS WORKING WITH SUCH POTENT CHEMICALS! I'M NOT THE SCIENTIST *HE* IS-- I'LL HAVE TO GIVE THESE TO THE LAB, FOR ANALYSIS!

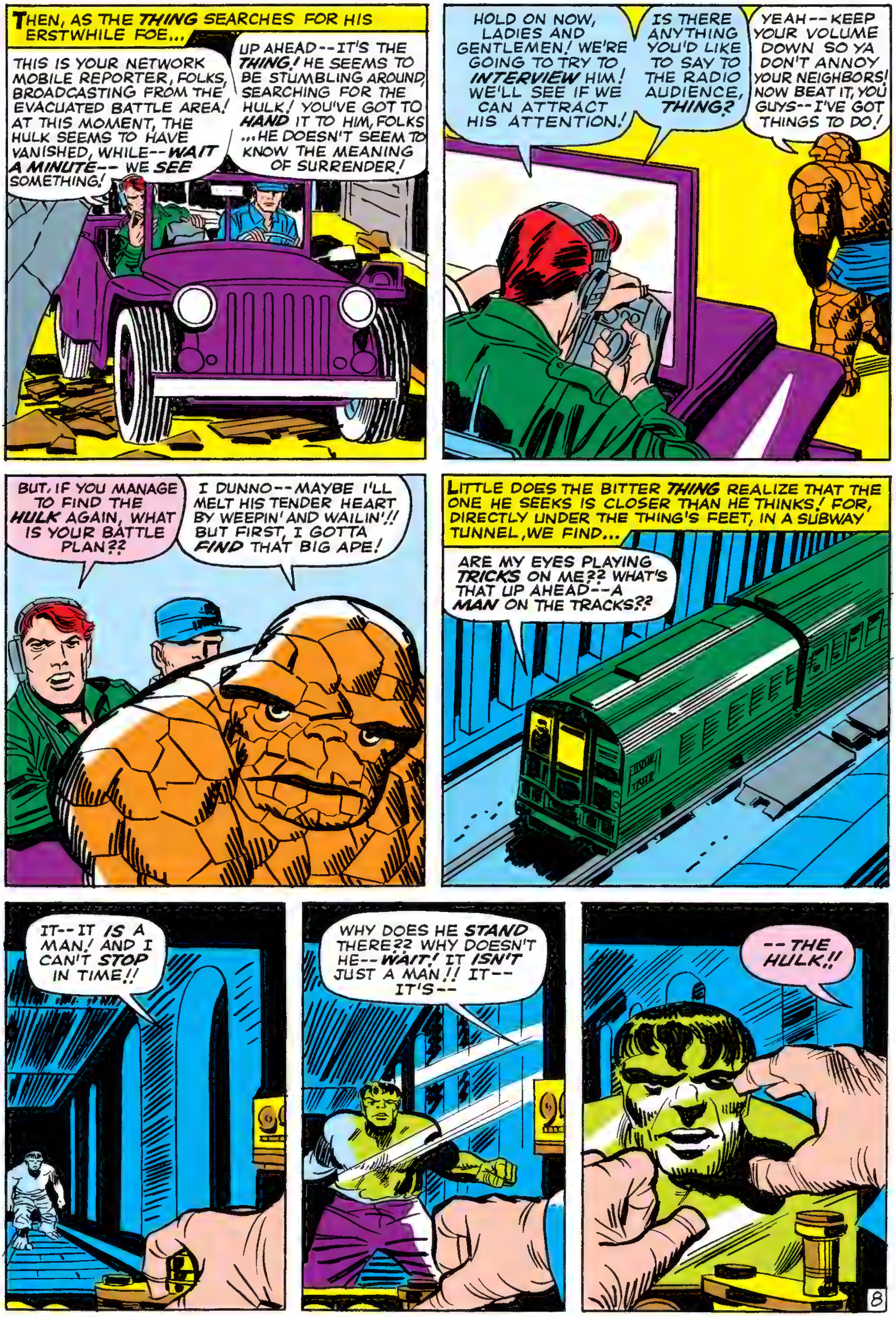

MEANWHILE, IN ANOTHER PART OF THE HOSPITAL...
WHO'S THE MYSTERY PATIENT, NURSE? WHY THE ASBESTOS SCREENS?
DIDN'T YOU *HEAR?* IT'S THE *HUMAN TORCH!* HE WAS BROUGHT IN UNDER SEDATION, AFTER BATTLING THAT DREADFUL *HULK!*

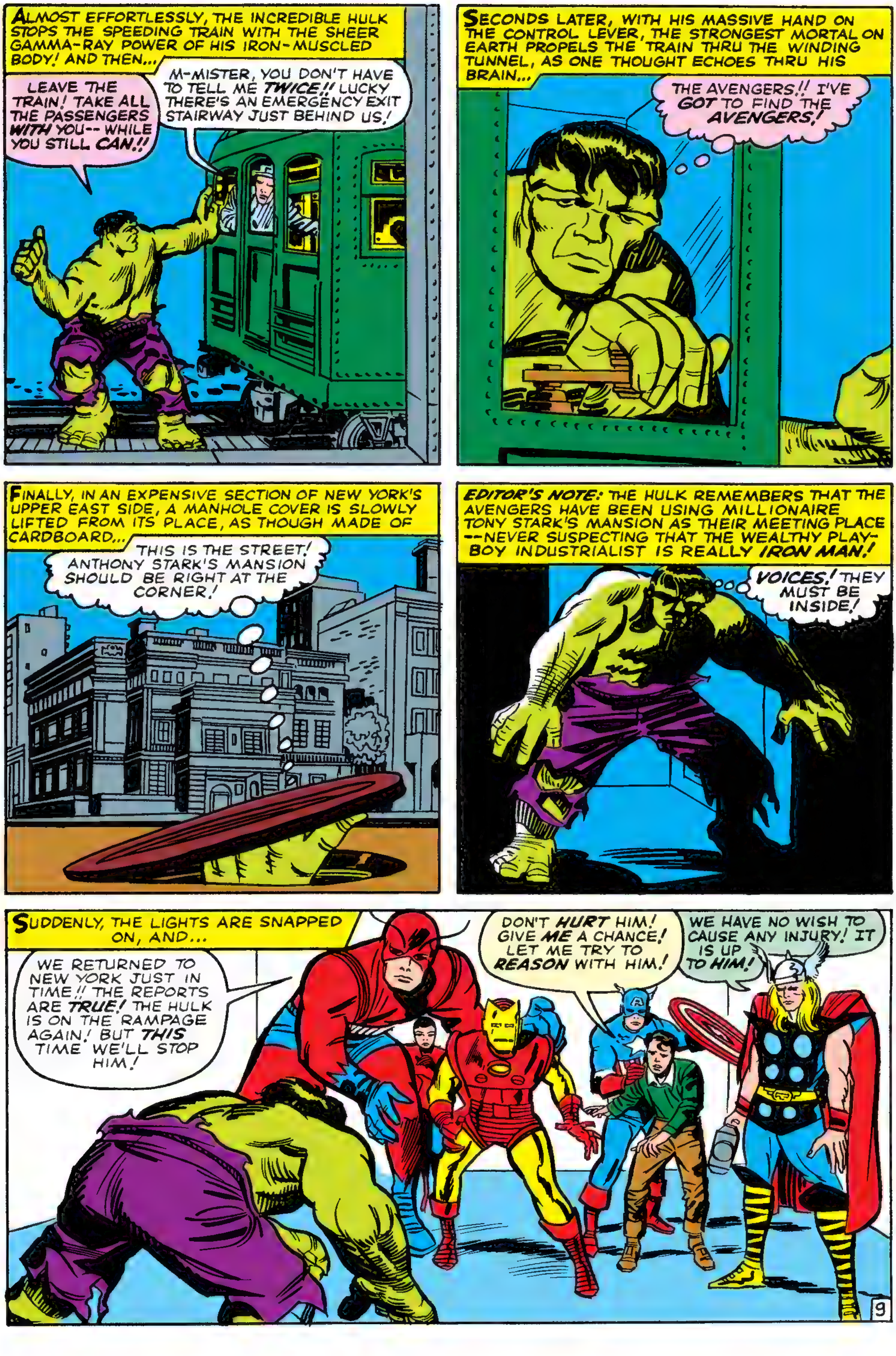

AT THAT MOMENT, THE GROGGY TEEN-AGER REGAINS CONSCIOUSNESS...
OHHH, MY HEAD! SAY--WHAT HAPPENED?? WHERE AM I??
WAIT! NOW I REMEMBER! THE HULK-- HE WAS FIGHTING WITH BEN! BEN NEEDED ME! I CAN'T FAIL HIM--
FLAME ON!
ASBESTOS PAJAMAS! CAN'T BURN THEM OFF-- BUT THEY'LL CRAMP MY STYLE!
I'LL NEED ALL MY SPEED --ALL MY SKILL --AGAINST THE HULK!
NO TIME TO REMOVE THE ASBESTOS BANDAGE! I'LL WORRY ABOUT IT LATER!
I JUST HOPE I'M NOT TOO LATE!
OOOHH... STILL WEAK--CAN'T FLY TOO FAR WITHOUT RESTING!
BUT I'VE GOT TO KEEP GOING! IF-- IF ANYTHING HAPPENS TO BEN--!
FINALLY...
LOOK! IT'S THE TORCH!
HOLD ON, BEN-- HOLD ON! I'M COMING--
THANK GOSH! HE'S STILL ON HIS FEET! STILL FIGHTING!
WELL, HE WON'T HAVE TO BATTLE ALONE NOW! I'LL HELP HIM IF IT KILLS ME!

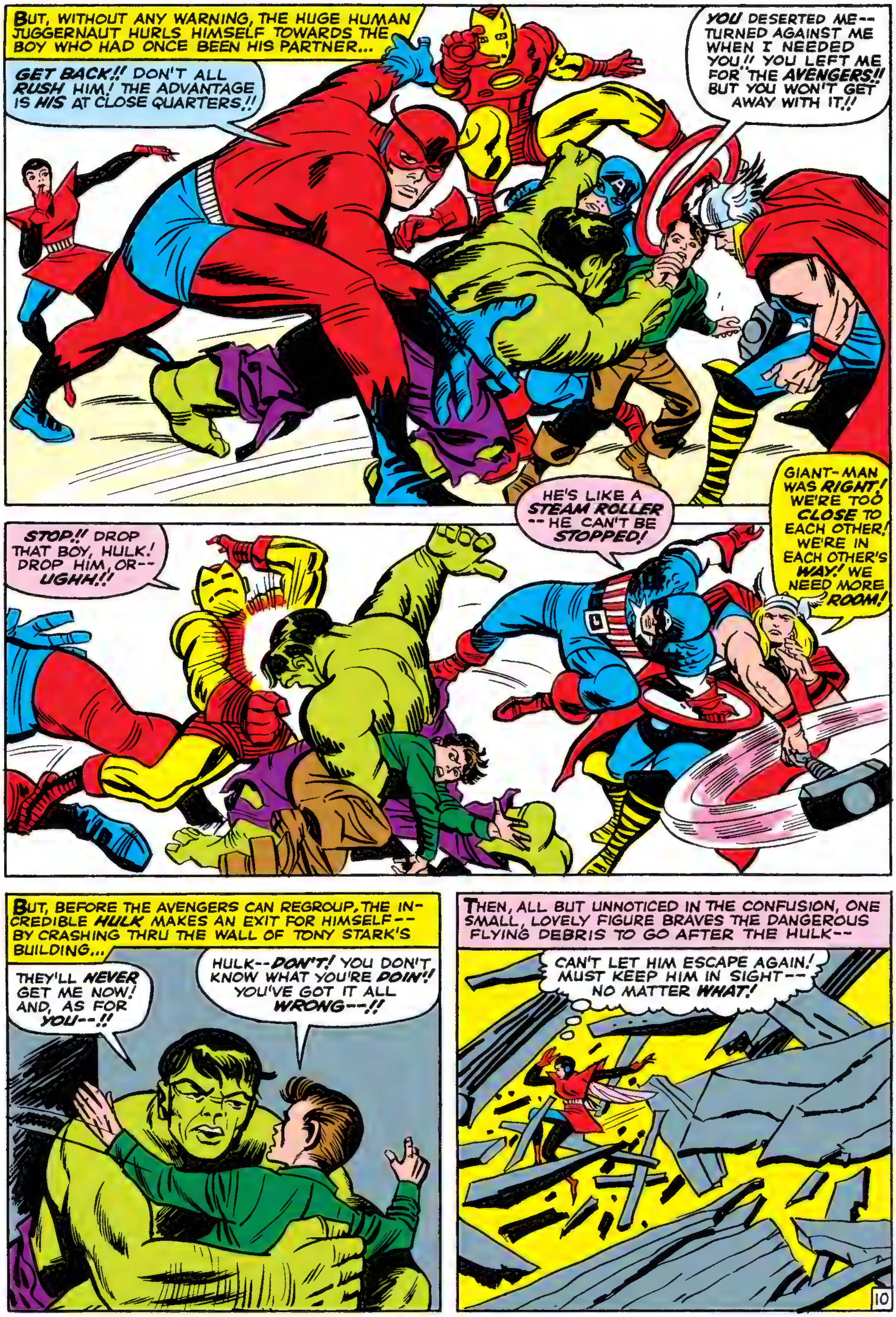

GOT TO USE MY HEAD--MAKE MY FLAME LAST! I'LL SHOOT TINY FIREBALLS AT THE EDGE OF THE BUILDING, TURNING THE BRICKS INTO SMALL, FLAMING MISSILES!
IXNAX, TORCHY BOY! STAY **OUT** OF IT, KID! NOTHIN' BUT **MUSCLE** IS GONNA BEAT THAT CRUMB-BUM!
THE **TORCH!** DON'T YOU FOOLS EVER KNOW WHEN TO **QUIT?!!**
YOUR FLAME DOESN'T FRIGHTEN **ME!** BUT IF YOU THINK IT'LL GIVE THE **THING** A BREATHER, YOU'RE **WRONG!**
YOU ALL THINK I'M JUST A MASS OF MUSCLE--THINK I HAVEN'T ANY BRAINS!
WELL, **THIS** WILL PROVE THE **HULK** IS AS SMART AS **ANY** OF YOU!
WATCH YOURSELF, KID! HE'S USIN' THAT HYDRANT LIKE A GIANT **WATER GUN,** TRYIN' TO DOUSE YOUR FLAME!
RELAX, BENJAMIN! HE'LL HAVE TO BE A LOT FASTER THAN **THAT** TO STOP ME!
BUT, WHILE I'M UP HERE, I'LL JUST MELT THE TOP OF THAT BUILDING A LITTLE, AND SEE WHAT HAPPENS!

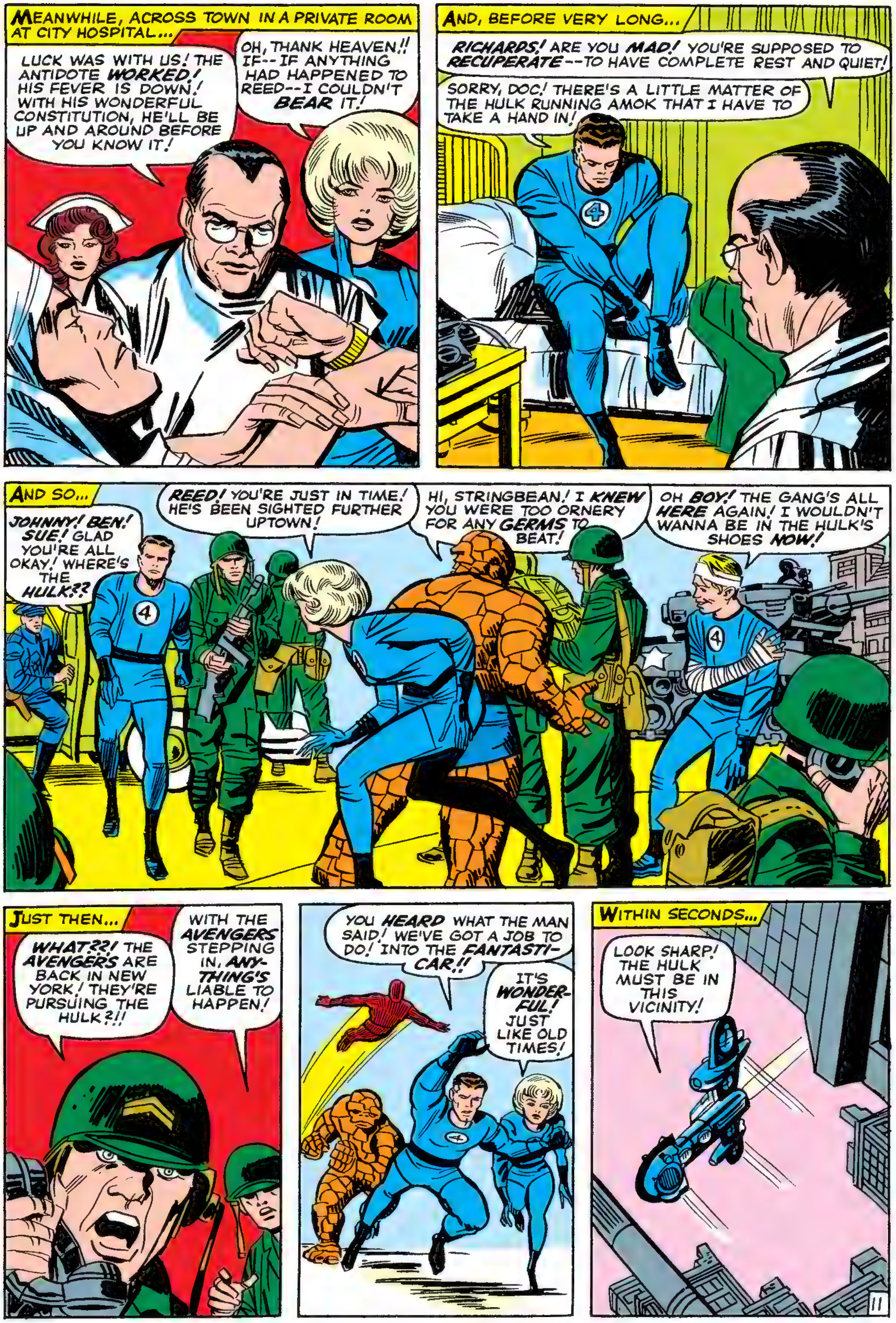

ALTHOUGH THE FALLING PILE OF BRICKS AND MORTAR COMPLETELY BURIES THE TWISTED HYDRANT, THE INCREDIBLE HULK MERELY BRUSHES THE RUBBLE ASIDE AND EMERGES AGAIN, MORE WRATHFUL THAN EVER!
YOUR FLAME WILL DIE OUT SOON, AND WHEN IT DOES--I'LL *FINISH* YOU!
LOOK, BIG FELLA! YOU *PROVED* YOUR POINT! WE *KNOW* YOU'RE NOT A 97-POUND WEAKLING! NOW WHY DON'T YOU CALM DOWN AND LET'S TALK THIS OVER...??
NO! YOU'RE TRYING TO *TRICK* ME--LIKE THE *AVENGERS* DID! BUT WHEN MY GUARD IS DOWN, YOU'LL *ATTACK!* WELL, IT WON'T WORK!
THE *HULK* WILL NEVER TRUST ANYONE EVER AGAIN! I'VE BEEN BETRAYED BY EVERYONE I'VE EVER KNOWN--BUT NO MORE! FROM NOW ON, THE *HULK* STRIKES FIRST--
--LIKE *THIS!*
SO UNBELIEVABLY POWERFUL, SO INCREDIBLY SHATTERING IS THE IMPACT, THAT THE VERY *CONCUSSION* HURLS BOTH THE THING AND THE TORCH HELPLESSLY INTO THE AIR, AS THE EARTH FOR MILES AROUND TREMBLES AND SHUDDERS!
AND THEN, AS SOON AS THE STAGGERING VIBRATIONS CEASE...
THAT *DID* IT! THEY'LL *NEVER* BE ABLE TO STOP THE HULK ALONE! WE'VE *GOT* TO STEP IN! *ALERT ALL UNITS!*
THE ARTILLERY IS IN POSITION, SIR! THEY'VE BEEN WAITING FOR YOUR COMMAND!
THEY'RE IN FIRING POSITION! ZEROING IN ON THE HULK! THIS IS *IT!*
H

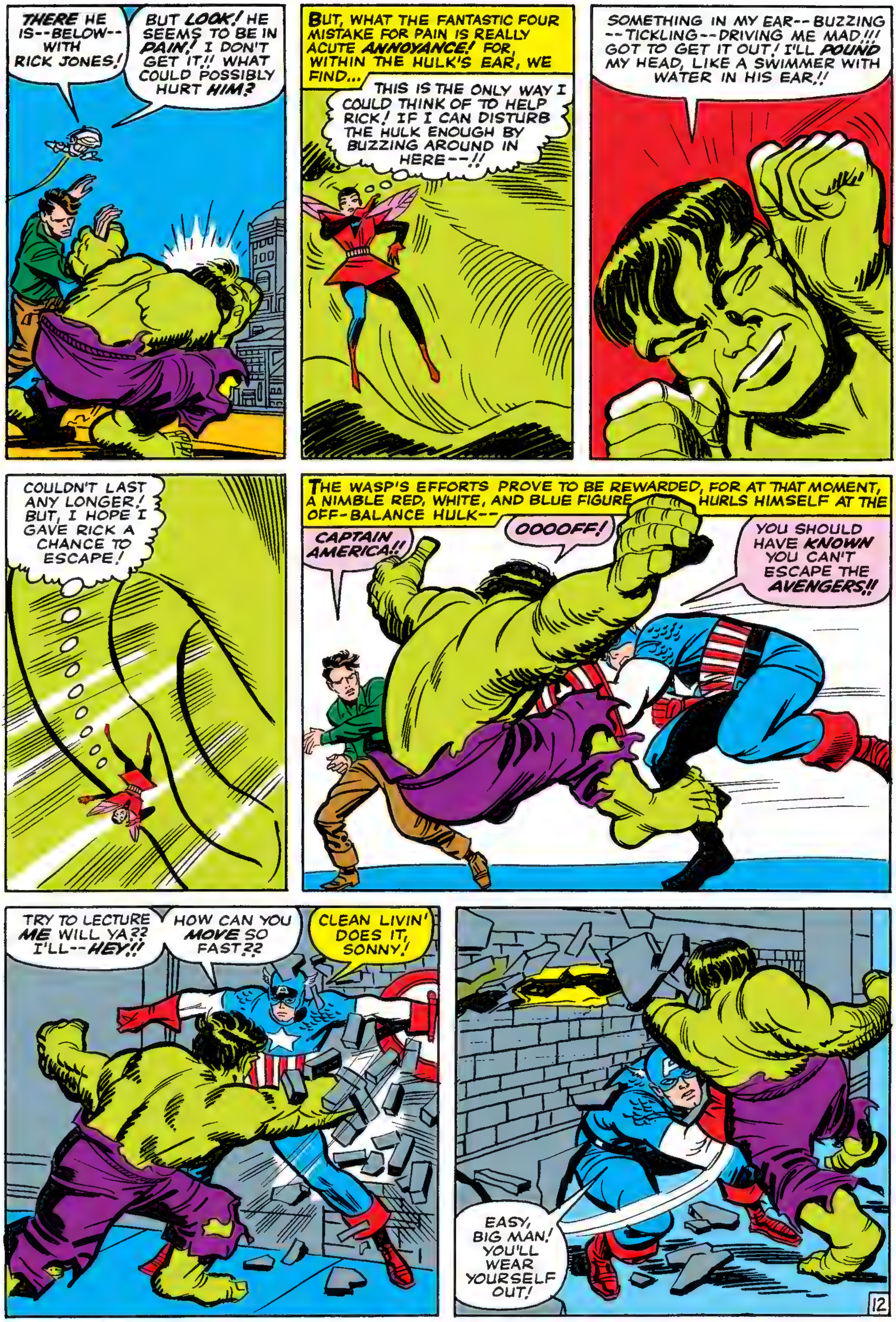

FIRE!
BUT ONCE AGAIN THE INCREDIBLE HULK STARTLES THOSE WHO OPPOSE HIM, BY DOING THE TOTALLY UNEXPECTED! HOLDING HIS GARGANTUAN HANDS IN FRONT OF HIM, LIKE A BASEBALL OUT-FIELDER, HE REACHES OUT-- GRABBING THE DEADLY SHELL IN A GRIP OF STEEL...
THEN, WITHOUT STOPPING, IN ONE SMOOTH, CONTINUOUS MOTION, HE SPINS AROUND, USING THE MOMENTUM OF THE HURTLING SHELL TO HELP PROPEL HIS GIANT FRAME...
EEEEEE
AND THEN, WITH THE MIGHTY MISSILE STILL SPINNING AND WHIRLING, HE RELEASES IT, SENDING IT PLUMMETING UPWARDS, TOWARD THE ROOFTOPS!
THE HULK DOESN'T NEED A CANNON IN ORDER TO FIRE A SHELL! THE HULK DOESN'T NEED ANYTHING!!
SCREEEEF
HA! THEY'LL THINK TWICE BEFORE THEY FIRE AT ME AGAIN!
WHILE NOT FAR AWAY...
JOHNNY! JOHNNY BOY-- SAY SOMETHING! ARE--ARE YA OKAY??
SURE, BEN! DON'T WORRY ABOUT ME! JUST HAVE TO CATCH MY BREATH-- JUST A MINUTE MORE...
NOW YOU STAY PUT, KID! YOU'VE DONE YOUR SHARE! THE REST IS UP TO ME, HEAR?
NEVER THOUGHT I'D EVER COME AGAINST ANYONE I COULDN'T POLISH OFF WITH ONE HAND TIED BEHIND ME! THIS BUSINESS OF BEIN' THE IDOL OF MILLIONS GETS TOUGHER ALL THE TIME!
SAY! WHERE DID HE GO? WHERE IS THE HULK??

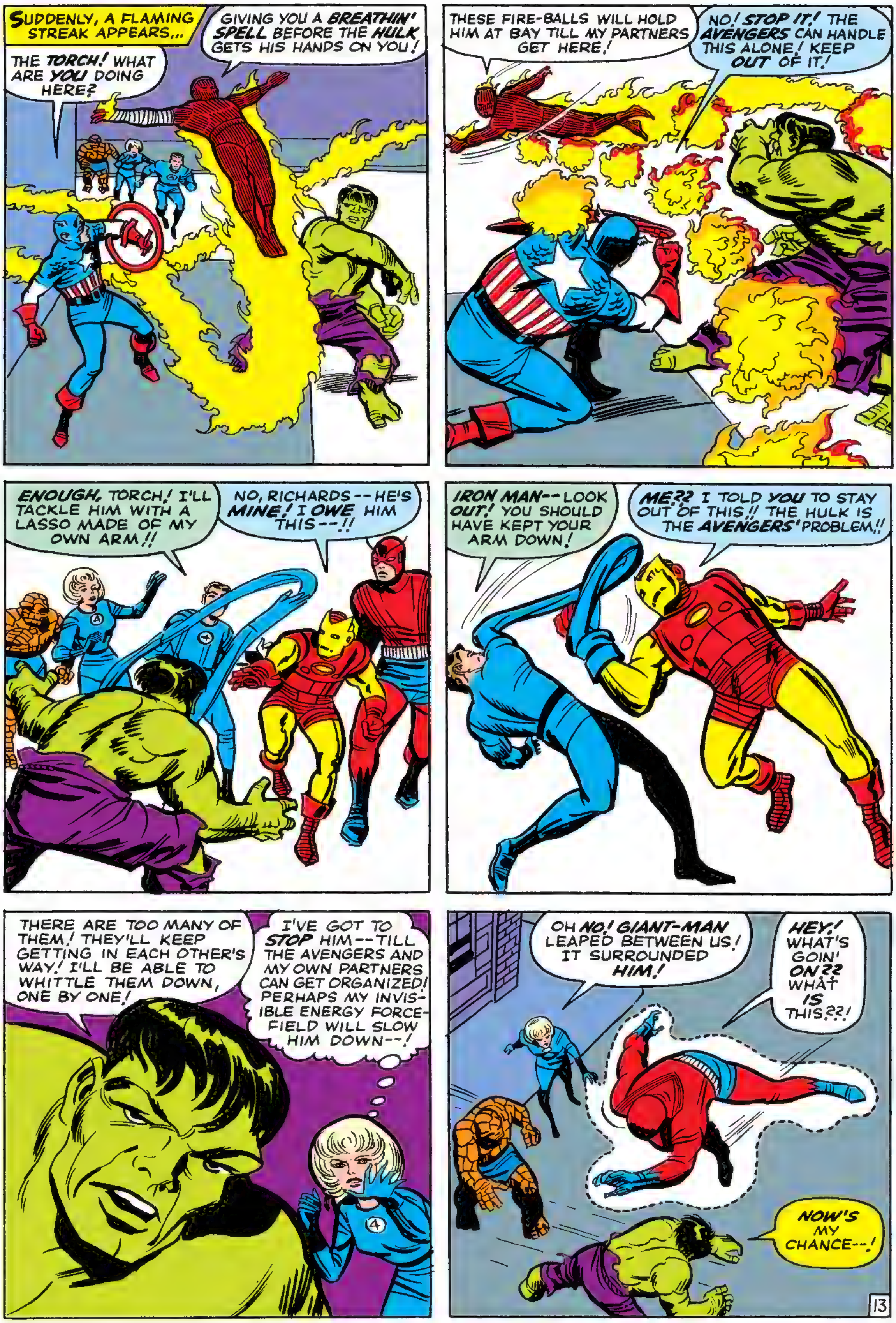

THEN, AS THE THING SEARCHES FOR HIS ERSTWHILE FOE...
THIS IS YOUR NETWORK MOBILE REPORTER, FOLKS, BROADCASTING FROM THE EVACUATED BATTLE AREA! AT THIS MOMENT, THE HULK SEEMS TO HAVE VANISHED, WHILE--WAIT A MINUTE-- WE SEE SOMETHING!
UP AHEAD--IT'S THE THING! HE SEEMS TO BE STUMBLING AROUND, SEARCHING FOR THE HULK! YOU'VE GOT TO HAND IT TO HIM, FOLKS ...HE DOESN'T SEEM TO KNOW THE MEANING OF SURRENDER!
HOLD ON NOW, LADIES AND GENTLEMEN! WE'RE GOING TO TRY TO INTERVIEW HIM! WE'LL SEE IF WE CAN ATTRACT HIS ATTENTION!
IS THERE ANYTHING YOU'D LIKE TO SAY TO THE RADIO AUDIENCE, THING?
YEAH--KEEP YOUR VOLUME DOWN SO YA DON'T ANNOY YOUR NEIGHBORS! NOW BEAT IT, YOU GUYS--I'VE GOT THINGS TO DO!
BUT, IF YOU MANAGE TO FIND THE HULK AGAIN, WHAT IS YOUR BATTLE PLAN??
I DUNNO--MAYBE I'LL MELT HIS TENDER HEART BY WEEPIN' AND WAILIN'!! BUT FIRST, I GOTTA FIND THAT BIG APE!
LITTLE DOES THE BITTER THING REALIZE THAT THE ONE HE SEEKS IS CLOSER THAN HE THINKS! FOR, DIRECTLY UNDER THE THING'S FEET, IN A SUBWAY TUNNEL, WE FIND...
ARE MY EYES PLAYING TRICKS ON ME?? WHAT'S THAT UP AHEAD--A MAN ON THE TRACKS??
IT--IT IS A MAN! AND I CAN'T STOP IN TIME!!
WHY DOES HE STAND THERE?? WHY DOESN'T HE--WAIT! IT ISN'T JUST A MAN!! IT--IT'S--
--THE HULK!!

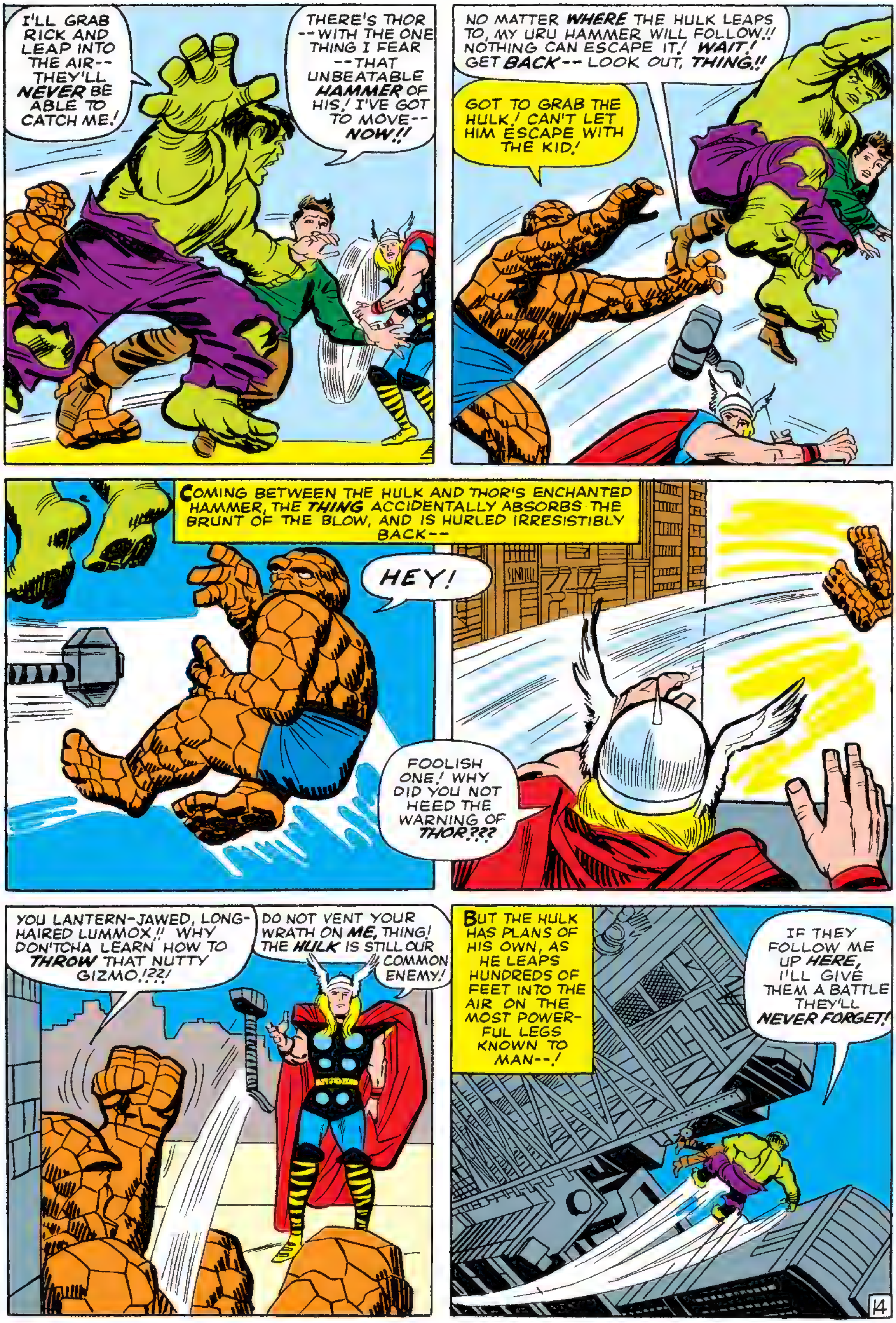

ALMOST EFFORTLESSLY, THE INCREDIBLE HULK STOPS THE SPEEDING TRAIN WITH THE SHEER GAMMA-RAY POWER OF HIS IRON-MUSCLED BODY! AND THEN...
LEAVE THE TRAIN! TAKE ALL THE PASSENGERS *WITH* YOU-- WHILE YOU STILL *CAN*!!
M-MISTER, YOU DON'T HAVE TO TELL ME *TWICE*!! LUCKY THERE'S AN EMERGENCY EXIT STAIRWAY JUST BEHIND US!
SECONDS LATER, WITH HIS MASSIVE HAND ON THE CONTROL LEVER, THE STRONGEST MORTAL ON EARTH PROPELS THE TRAIN THRU THE WINDING TUNNEL, AS ONE THOUGHT ECHOES THRU HIS BRAIN...
THE AVENGERS!! I'VE *GOT* TO FIND THE *AVENGERS*!
FINALLY, IN AN EXPENSIVE SECTION OF NEW YORK'S UPPER EAST SIDE, A MANHOLE COVER IS SLOWLY LIFTED FROM ITS PLACE, AS THOUGH MADE OF CARDBOARD...
THIS IS THE STREET! ANTHONY STARK'S MANSION SHOULD BE RIGHT AT THE CORNER!
EDITOR'S NOTE: THE HULK REMEMBERS THAT THE AVENGERS HAVE BEEN USING MILLIONAIRE TONY STARK'S MANSION AS THEIR MEETING PLACE --NEVER SUSPECTING THAT THE WEALTHY PLAYBOY INDUSTRIALIST IS REALLY *IRON MAN*!
VOICES! THEY MUST BE INSIDE!
SUDDENLY, THE LIGHTS ARE SNAPPED ON, AND...
WE RETURNED TO NEW YORK JUST IN TIME!! THE REPORTS ARE *TRUE*! THE HULK IS ON THE RAMPAGE AGAIN! BUT *THIS* TIME WE'LL STOP HIM!
DON'T *HURT* HIM! GIVE *ME* A CHANCE! LET ME TRY TO *REASON* WITH HIM!
WE HAVE NO WISH TO CAUSE ANY INJURY! IT IS UP TO *HIM*!

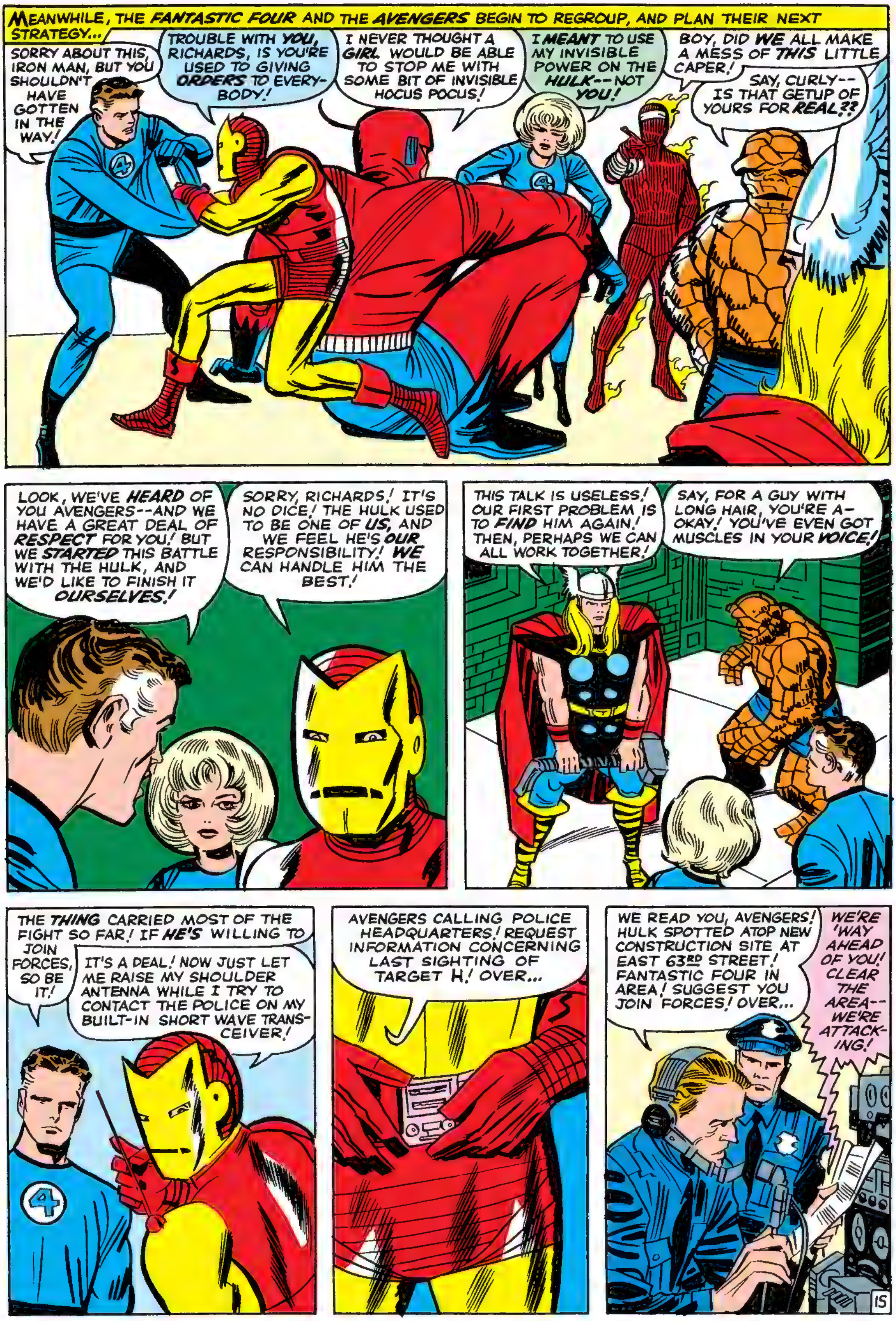

BUT, WITHOUT ANY WARNING, THE HUGE HUMAN JUGGERNAUT HURLS HIMSELF TOWARDS THE BOY WHO HAD ONCE BEEN HIS PARTNER...
GET BACK!! DON'T ALL RUSH HIM! THE ADVANTAGE IS HIS AT CLOSE QUARTERS!!
YOU DESERTED ME-- TURNED AGAINST ME WHEN I NEEDED YOU!! YOU LEFT ME FOR THE AVENGERS!! BUT YOU WON'T GET AWAY WITH IT!!
STOP!! DROP THAT BOY, HULK! DROP HIM, OR-- UGHH!!
HE'S LIKE A STEAM ROLLER -- HE CAN'T BE STOPPED!
GIANT-MAN WAS RIGHT! WE'RE TOO CLOSE TO EACH OTHER! WE'RE IN EACH OTHER'S WAY! WE NEED MORE ROOM!
BUT, BEFORE THE AVENGERS CAN REGROUP, THE INCREDIBLE HULK MAKES AN EXIT FOR HIMSELF-- BY CRASHING THRU THE WALL OF TONY STARK'S BUILDING...
THEY'LL NEVER GET ME NOW! AND, AS FOR YOU--!!
HULK--DON'T! YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE DOIN'! YOU'VE GOT IT ALL WRONG--!!
THEN, ALL BUT UNNOTICED IN THE CONFUSION, ONE SMALL, LOVELY FIGURE BRAVES THE DANGEROUS FLYING DEBRIS TO GO AFTER THE HULK--
CAN'T LET HIM ESCAPE AGAIN! MUST KEEP HIM IN SIGHT-- NO MATTER WHAT!

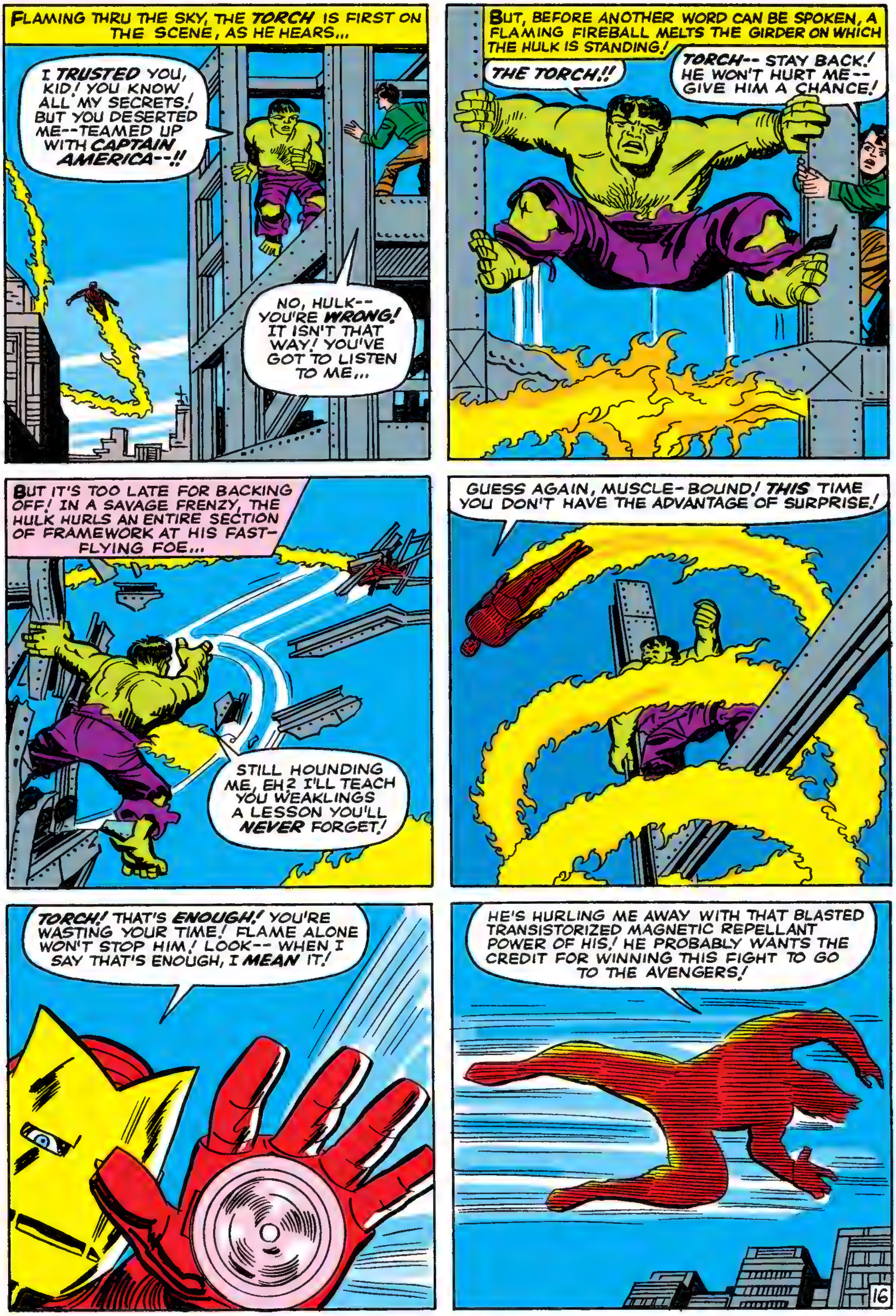

MEANWHILE, ACROSS TOWN IN A PRIVATE ROOM AT CITY HOSPITAL...
LUCK WAS WITH US! THE ANTIDOTE WORKED! HIS FEVER IS DOWN! WITH HIS WONDERFUL CONSTITUTION, HE'LL BE UP AND AROUND BEFORE YOU KNOW IT!
OH, THANK HEAVEN!! IF-- IF ANYTHING HAD HAPPENED TO REED-- I COULDN'T BEAR IT!
AND, BEFORE VERY LONG...
RICHARDS! ARE YOU MAD! YOU'RE SUPPOSED TO RECUPERATE -- TO HAVE COMPLETE REST AND QUIET!
SORRY, DOC! THERE'S A LITTLE MATTER OF THE HULK RUNNING AMOK THAT I HAVE TO TAKE A HAND IN!
AND SO...
JOHNNY! BEN! SUE! GLAD YOU'RE ALL OKAY! WHERE'S THE HULK??
REED! YOU'RE JUST IN TIME! HE'S BEEN SIGHTED FURTHER UPTOWN!
HI, STRINGBEAN! I KNEW YOU WERE TOO ORNERY FOR ANY GERMS TO BEAT!
OH BOY! THE GANG'S ALL HERE AGAIN! I WOULDN'T WANNA BE IN THE HULK'S SHOES NOW!
JUST THEN...
WHAT??! THE AVENGERS ARE BACK IN NEW YORK! THEY'RE PURSUING THE HULK?!!
WITH THE AVENGERS STEPPING IN, ANYTHING'S LIABLE TO HAPPEN!
YOU HEARD WHAT THE MAN SAID! WE'VE GOT A JOB TO DO! INTO THE FANTASTI-CAR!!
IT'S WONDERFUL! JUST LIKE OLD TIMES!
WITHIN SECONDS...
LOOK SHARP! THE HULK MUST BE IN THIS VICINITY!

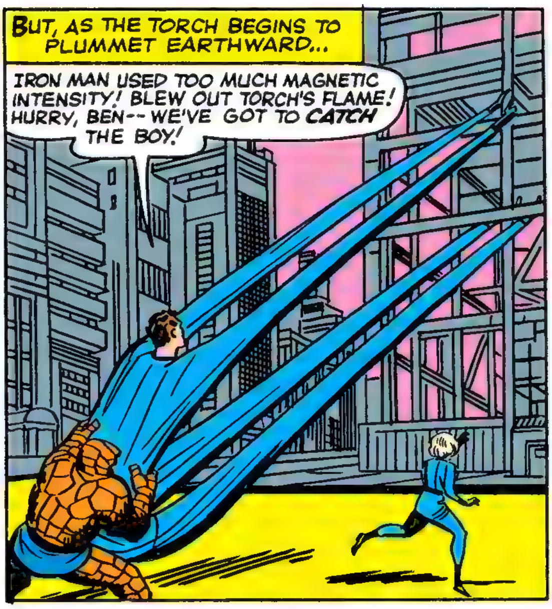

THERE HE IS--BELOW--WITH RICK JONES!
BUT LOOK! HE SEEMS TO BE IN PAIN! I DON'T GET IT!! WHAT COULD POSSIBLY HURT HIM?
BUT, WHAT THE FANTASTIC FOUR MISTAKE FOR PAIN IS REALLY ACUTE ANNOYANCE! FOR, WITHIN THE HULK'S EAR, WE FIND...
THIS IS THE ONLY WAY I COULD THINK OF TO HELP RICK! IF I CAN DISTURB THE HULK ENOUGH BY BUZZING AROUND IN HERE--!!
SOMETHING IN MY EAR--BUZZING--TICKLING--DRIVING ME MAD!!! GOT TO GET IT OUT! I'LL POUND MY HEAD, LIKE A SWIMMER WITH WATER IN HIS EAR!!
COULDN'T LAST ANY LONGER! BUT, I HOPE I GAVE RICK A CHANCE TO ESCAPE!
THE WASP'S EFFORTS PROVE TO BE REWARDED, FOR AT THAT MOMENT, A NIMBLE RED, WHITE, AND BLUE FIGURE HURLS HIMSELF AT THE OFF-BALANCE HULK--
CAPTAIN AMERICA!!
OOOOFF!
YOU SHOULD HAVE KNOWN YOU CAN'T ESCAPE THE AVENGERS!!
TRY TO LECTURE ME WILL YA?? I'LL--HEY!!
HOW CAN YOU MOVE SO FAST??
CLEAN LIVIN' DOES IT, SONNY!
EASY, BIG MAN! YOU'LL WEAR YOURSELF OUT!

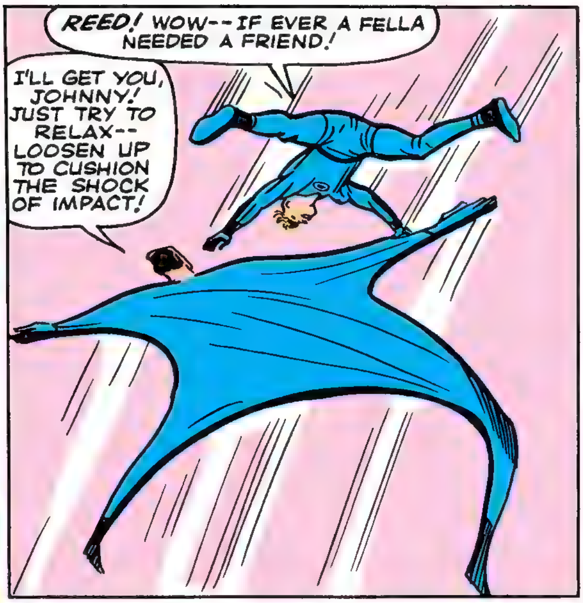

SUDDENLY, A FLAMING STREAK APPEARS...
THE TORCH! WHAT ARE YOU DOING HERE?
GIVING YOU A BREATHIN' SPELL BEFORE THE HULK GETS HIS HANDS ON YOU!
THESE FIRE-BALLS WILL HOLD HIM AT BAY TILL MY PARTNERS GET HERE!
NO! STOP IT! THE AVENGERS CAN HANDLE THIS ALONE! KEEP OUT OF IT!
ENOUGH, TORCH! I'LL TACKLE HIM WITH A LASSO MADE OF MY OWN ARM!!
NO, RICHARDS--HE'S MINE! I OWE HIM THIS--!!
IRON MAN--LOOK OUT! YOU SHOULD HAVE KEPT YOUR ARM DOWN!
ME?? I TOLD YOU TO STAY OUT OF THIS!! THE HULK IS THE AVENGERS' PROBLEM!!
THERE ARE TOO MANY OF THEM! THEY'LL KEEP GETTING IN EACH OTHER'S WAY! I'LL BE ABLE TO WHITTLE THEM DOWN, ONE BY ONE!
I'VE GOT TO STOP HIM--TILL THE AVENGERS AND MY OWN PARTNERS CAN GET ORGANIZED! PERHAPS MY INVISIBLE ENERGY FORCE-FIELD WILL SLOW HIM DOWN--!
OH NO! GIANT-MAN LEAPED BETWEEN US! IT SURROUNDED HIM!
HEY! WHAT'S GOIN' ON?? WHAT IS THIS??!
NOW'S MY CHANCE--!

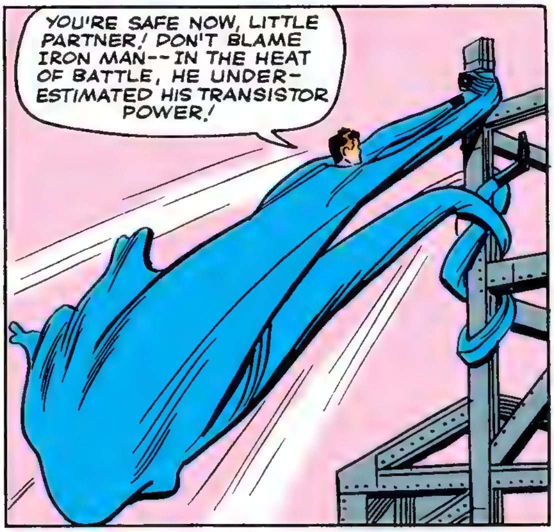

I'LL GRAB RICK AND LEAP INTO THE AIR-- THEY'LL **NEVER** BE ABLE TO CATCH ME!
THERE'S THOR --WITH THE ONE THING I FEAR --THAT UNBEATABLE **HAMMER** OF HIS! I'VE GOT TO MOVE-- **NOW!!**
NO MATTER **WHERE** THE HULK LEAPS TO, MY URU HAMMER WILL FOLLOW!! NOTHING CAN ESCAPE IT! **WAIT!** GET **BACK**-- LOOK OUT, **THING!!**
GOT TO GRAB THE HULK! CAN'T LET HIM ESCAPE WITH THE KID!
COMING BETWEEN THE HULK AND THOR'S ENCHANTED HAMMER, THE **THING** ACCIDENTALLY ABSORBS THE BRUNT OF THE BLOW, AND IS HURLED IRRESISTIBLY BACK--
HEY!
FOOLISH ONE! WHY DID YOU NOT HEED THE WARNING OF **THOR???**
YOU LANTERN-JAWED, LONG-HAIRED LUMMOX!! WHY DON'TCHA LEARN HOW TO **THROW** THAT NUTTY GIZMO!?!?!
DO NOT VENT YOUR WRATH ON **ME**, THING! THE **HULK** IS STILL OUR COMMON ENEMY!
BUT THE HULK HAS PLANS OF HIS OWN, AS HE LEAPS HUNDREDS OF FEET INTO THE AIR ON THE MOST POWERFUL LEGS KNOWN TO MAN--!
IF THEY FOLLOW ME UP **HERE**, I'LL GIVE THEM A BATTLE THEY'LL **NEVER FORGET!**

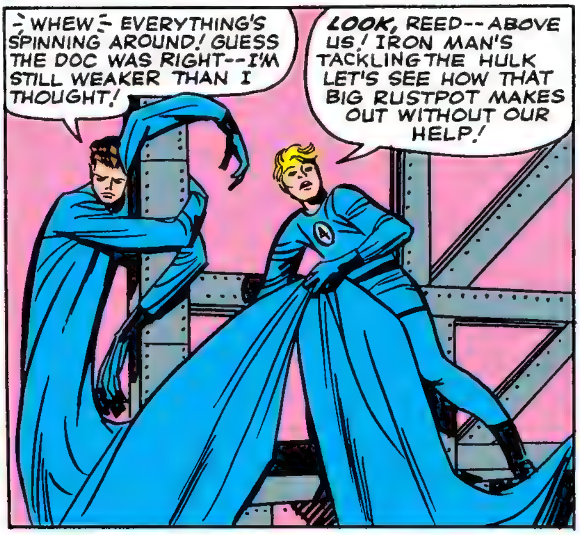

MEANWHILE, THE FANTASTIC FOUR AND THE AVENGERS BEGIN TO REGROUP, AND PLAN THEIR NEXT STRATEGY...
SORRY ABOUT THIS, IRON MAN, BUT YOU SHOULDN'T HAVE GOTTEN IN THE WAY!
TROUBLE WITH YOU, RICHARDS, IS YOU'RE USED TO GIVING ORDERS TO EVERYBODY!
I NEVER THOUGHT A GIRL WOULD BE ABLE TO STOP ME WITH SOME BIT OF INVISIBLE HOCUS POCUS!
I MEANT TO USE MY INVISIBLE POWER ON THE HULK--NOT YOU!
BOY, DID WE ALL MAKE A MESS OF THIS LITTLE CAPER!
SAY, CURLY--IS THAT GETUP OF YOURS FOR REAL??
LOOK, WE'VE HEARD OF YOU AVENGERS--AND WE HAVE A GREAT DEAL OF RESPECT FOR YOU! BUT WE STARTED THIS BATTLE WITH THE HULK, AND WE'D LIKE TO FINISH IT OURSELVES!
SORRY, RICHARDS! IT'S NO DICE! THE HULK USED TO BE ONE OF US, AND WE FEEL HE'S OUR RESPONSIBILITY! WE CAN HANDLE HIM THE BEST!
THIS TALK IS USELESS! OUR FIRST PROBLEM IS TO FIND HIM AGAIN! THEN, PERHAPS WE CAN ALL WORK TOGETHER!
SAY, FOR A GUY WITH LONG HAIR, YOU'RE A-OKAY! YOU'VE EVEN GOT MUSCLES IN YOUR VOICE!
THE THING CARRIED MOST OF THE FIGHT SO FAR! IF HE'S WILLING TO JOIN FORCES, SO BE IT!
IT'S A DEAL! NOW JUST LET ME RAISE MY SHOULDER ANTENNA WHILE I TRY TO CONTACT THE POLICE ON MY BUILT-IN SHORT WAVE TRANSCEIVER!
AVENGERS CALLING POLICE HEADQUARTERS! REQUEST INFORMATION CONCERNING LAST SIGHTING OF TARGET H! OVER...
WE READ YOU, AVENGERS! HULK SPOTTED ATOP NEW CONSTRUCTION SITE AT EAST 63RD STREET! FANTASTIC FOUR IN AREA! SUGGEST YOU JOIN FORCES! OVER...
WE'RE 'WAY AHEAD OF YOU! CLEAR THE AREA--WE'RE ATTACKING!

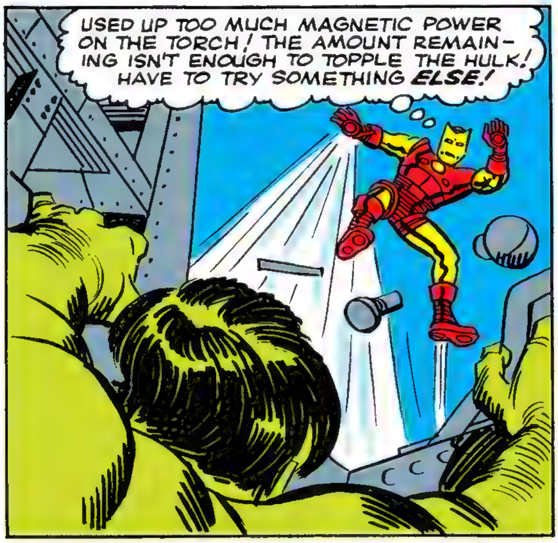

FLAMING THRU THE SKY, THE TORCH IS FIRST ON THE SCENE, AS HE HEARS...
I TRUSTED YOU, KID! YOU KNOW ALL MY SECRETS! BUT YOU DESERTED ME--TEAMED UP WITH CAPTAIN AMERICA--!!
NO, HULK-- YOU'RE WRONG! IT ISN'T THAT WAY! YOU'VE GOT TO LISTEN TO ME...
BUT, BEFORE ANOTHER WORD CAN BE SPOKEN, A FLAMING FIREBALL MELTS THE GIRDER ON WHICH THE HULK IS STANDING!
THE TORCH!!
TORCH-- STAY BACK! HE WON'T HURT ME-- GIVE HIM A CHANCE!
BUT IT'S TOO LATE FOR BACKING OFF! IN A SAVAGE FRENZY, THE HULK HURLS AN ENTIRE SECTION OF FRAMEWORK AT HIS FAST-FLYING FOE...
STILL HOUNDING ME, EH? I'LL TEACH YOU WEAKLINGS A LESSON YOU'LL NEVER FORGET!
GUESS AGAIN, MUSCLE-BOUND! THIS TIME YOU DON'T HAVE THE ADVANTAGE OF SURPRISE!
TORCH! THAT'S ENOUGH! YOU'RE WASTING YOUR TIME! FLAME ALONE WON'T STOP HIM! LOOK-- WHEN I SAY THAT'S ENOUGH, I MEAN IT!
HE'S HURLING ME AWAY WITH THAT BLASTED TRANSISTORIZED MAGNETIC REPELLANT POWER OF HIS! HE PROBABLY WANTS THE CREDIT FOR WINNING THIS FIGHT TO GO TO THE AVENGERS!

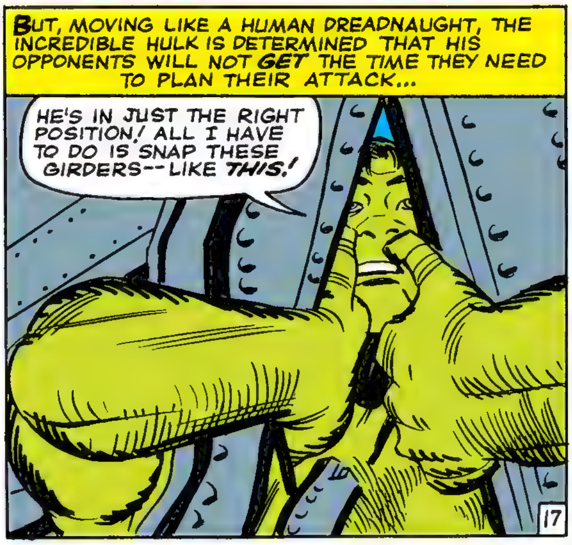

BUT, AS THE TORCH BEGINS TO PLUMMET EARTHWARD...
IRON MAN USED TOO MUCH MAGNETIC INTENSITY! BLEW OUT TORCH'S FLAME! HURRY, BEN--WE'VE GOT TO *CATCH* THE BOY!

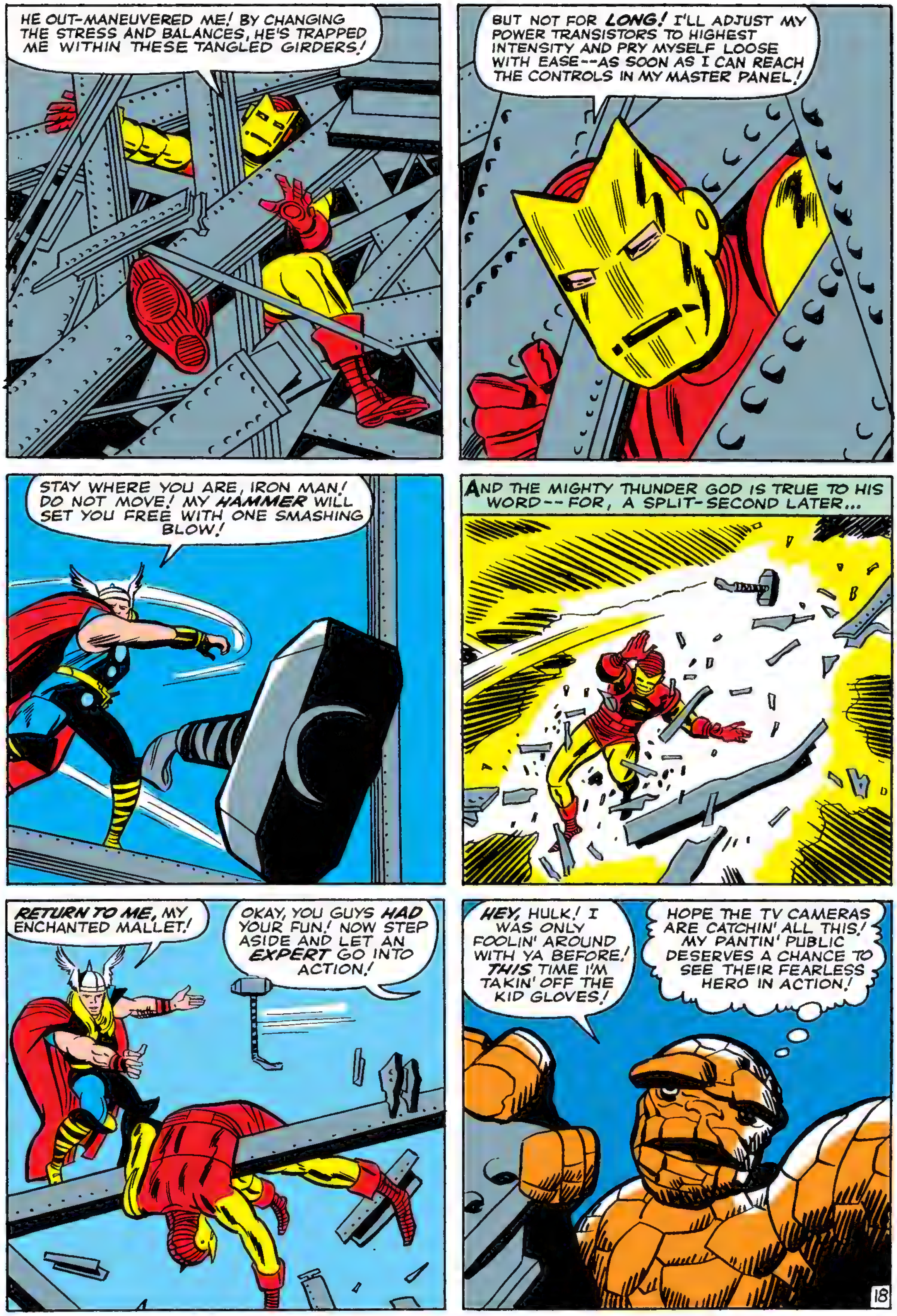

REED! WOW--IF EVER A FELLA NEEDED A FRIEND!
I'LL GET YOU, JOHNNY! JUST TRY TO RELAX--LOOSEN UP TO CUSHION THE SHOCK OF IMPACT!

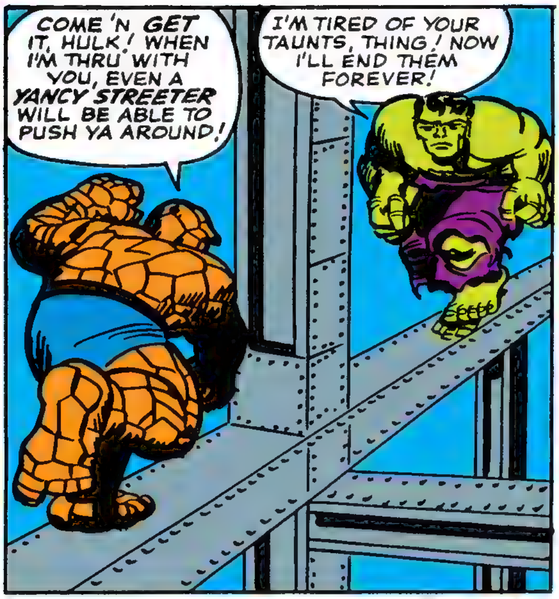

YOU'RE SAFE NOW, LITTLE PARTNER! DON'T BLAME IRON MAN--IN THE HEAT OF BATTLE, HE UNDER-ESTIMATED HIS TRANSISTOR POWER!

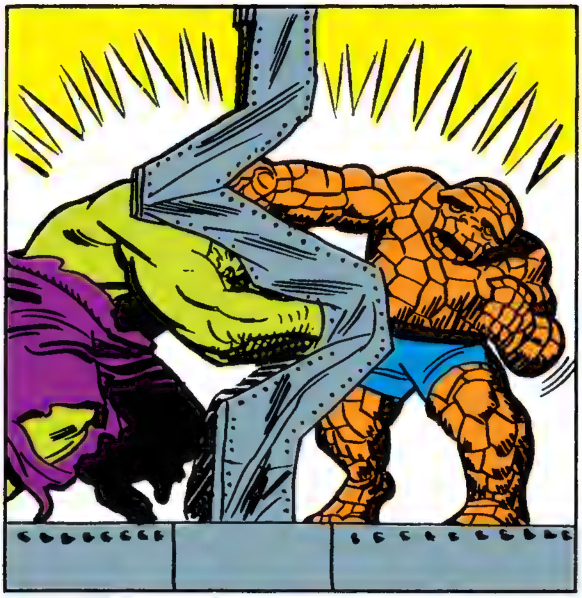

-WHEW- EVERYTHING'S SPINNING AROUND! GUESS THE DOC WAS RIGHT--I'M STILL WEAKER THAN I THOUGHT!
LOOK, REED--ABOVE US! IRON MAN'S TACKLING THE HULK LET'S SEE HOW THAT BIG RUSTPOT MAKES OUT WITHOUT OUR HELP!

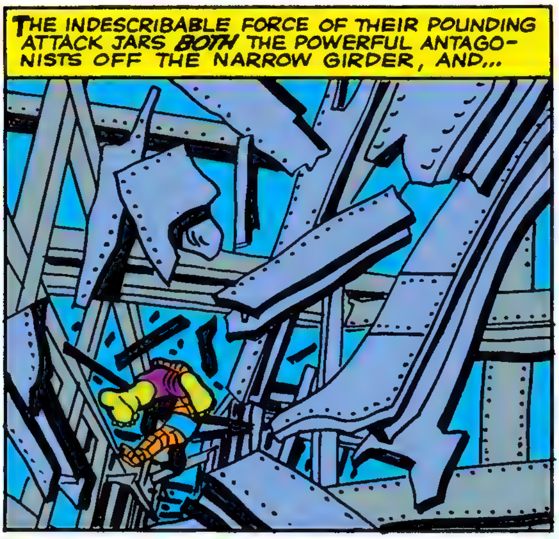

USED UP TOO MUCH MAGNETIC POWER ON THE TORCH! THE AMOUNT REMAINING ISN'T ENOUGH TO TOPPLE THE HULK! HAVE TO TRY SOMETHING *ELSE!*

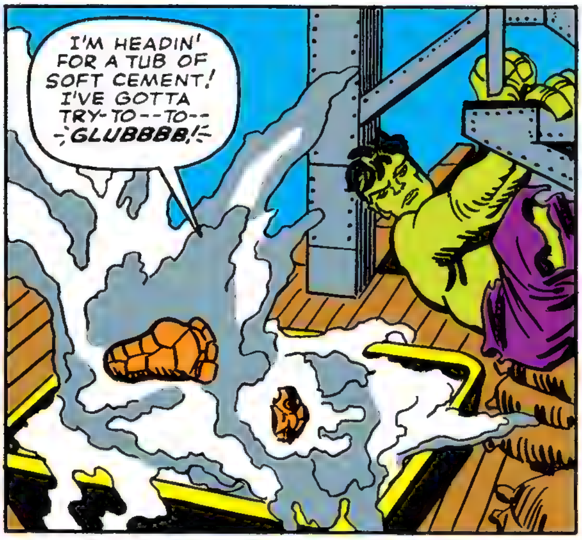

BUT, MOVING LIKE A HUMAN DREADNAUGHT, THE INCREDIBLE HULK IS DETERMINED THAT HIS OPPONENTS WILL NOT *GET* THE TIME THEY NEED TO PLAN THEIR ATTACK...
HE'S IN JUST THE RIGHT POSITION! ALL I HAVE TO DO IS SNAP THESE GIRDERS--LIKE *THIS!*

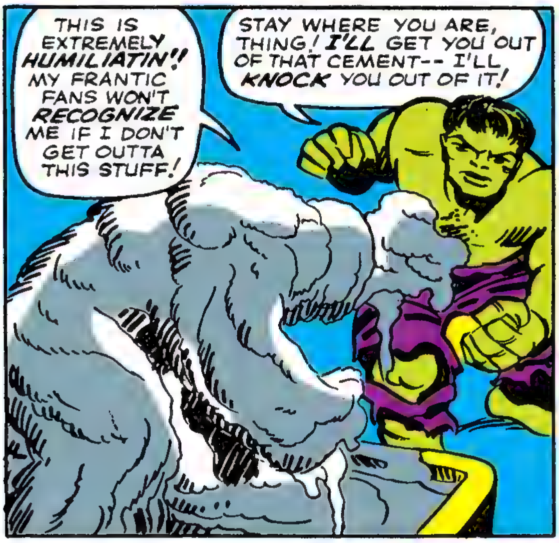

HE OUT-MANEUVERED ME! BY CHANGING THE STRESS AND BALANCES, HE'S TRAPPED ME WITHIN THESE TANGLED GIRDERS!
BUT NOT FOR **LONG!** I'LL ADJUST MY POWER TRANSISTORS TO HIGHEST INTENSITY AND PRY MYSELF LOOSE WITH EASE--AS SOON AS I CAN REACH THE CONTROLS IN MY MASTER PANEL!
STAY WHERE YOU ARE, IRON MAN! DO NOT MOVE! MY **HAMMER** WILL SET YOU FREE WITH ONE SMASHING BLOW!
AND THE MIGHTY THUNDER GOD IS TRUE TO HIS WORD--FOR, A SPLIT-SECOND LATER...
RETURN TO ME, MY ENCHANTED MALLET!
OKAY, YOU GUYS **HAD** YOUR FUN! NOW STEP ASIDE AND LET AN **EXPERT** GO INTO ACTION!
HEY, HULK! I WAS ONLY FOOLIN' AROUND WITH YA BEFORE! **THIS** TIME I'M TAKIN' OFF THE KID GLOVES!
HOPE THE TV CAMERAS ARE CATCHIN' ALL THIS! MY PANTIN' PUBLIC DESERVES A CHANCE TO SEE THEIR FEARLESS HERO IN ACTION!

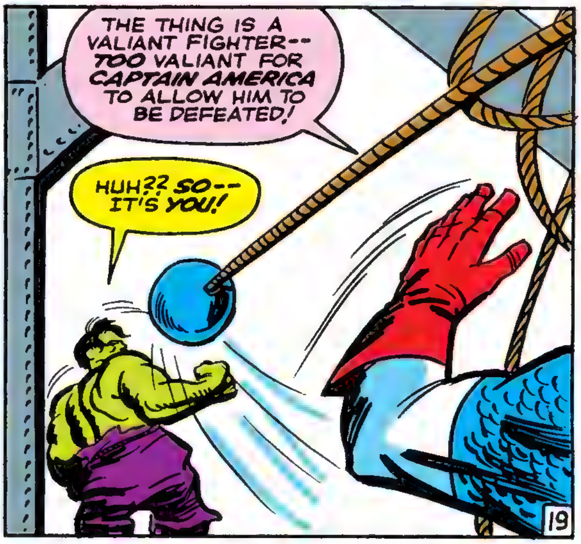

COME 'N GET IT, HULK! WHEN I'M THRU WITH YOU, EVEN A YANCY STREETER WILL BE ABLE TO PUSH YA AROUND!
I'M TIRED OF YOUR TAUNTS, THING! NOW I'LL END THEM FOREVER!

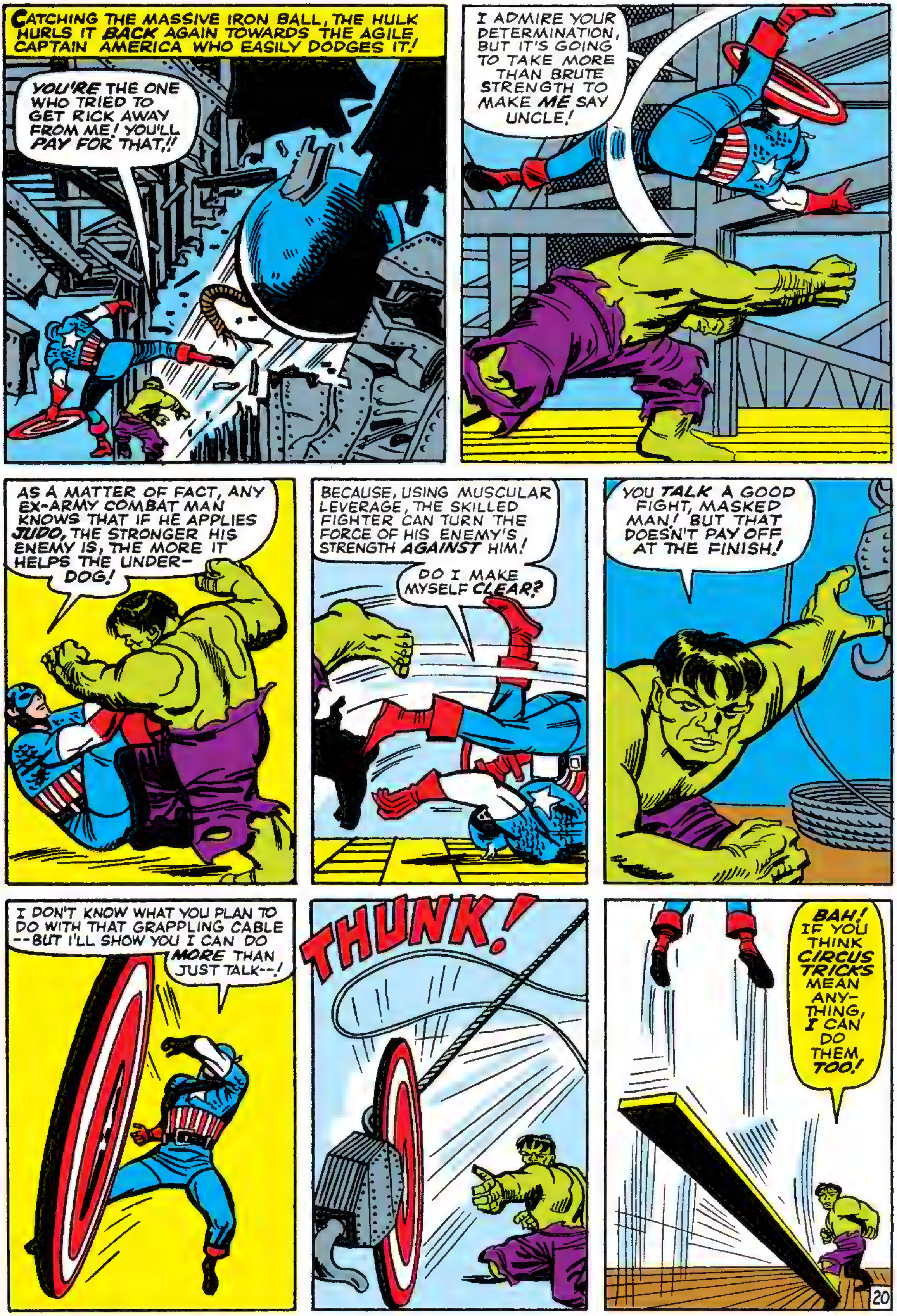


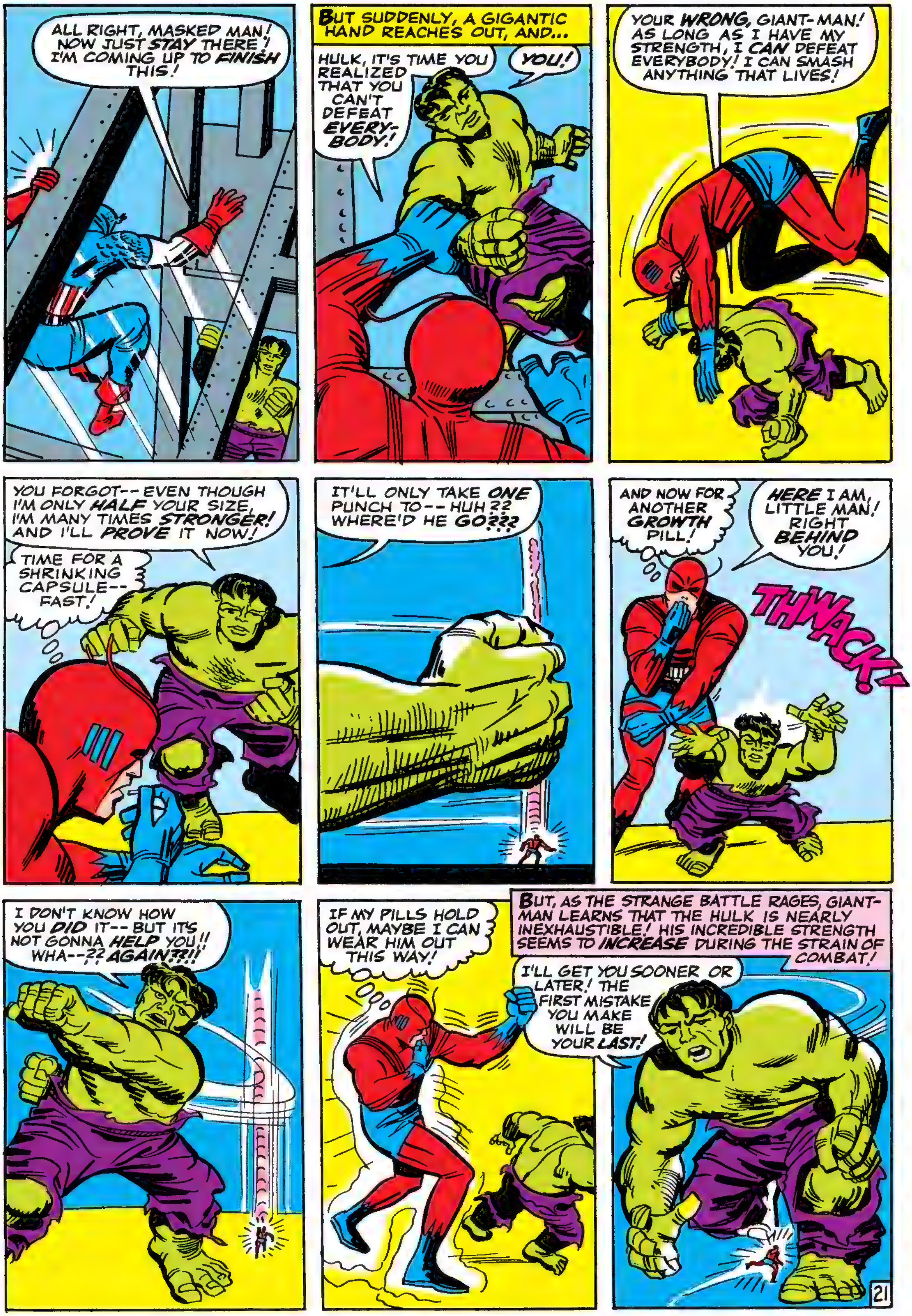

THE INDESCRIBABLE FORCE OF THEIR POUNDING ATTACK JARS BOTH THE POWERFUL ANTAGONISTS OFF THE NARROW GIRDER, AND...

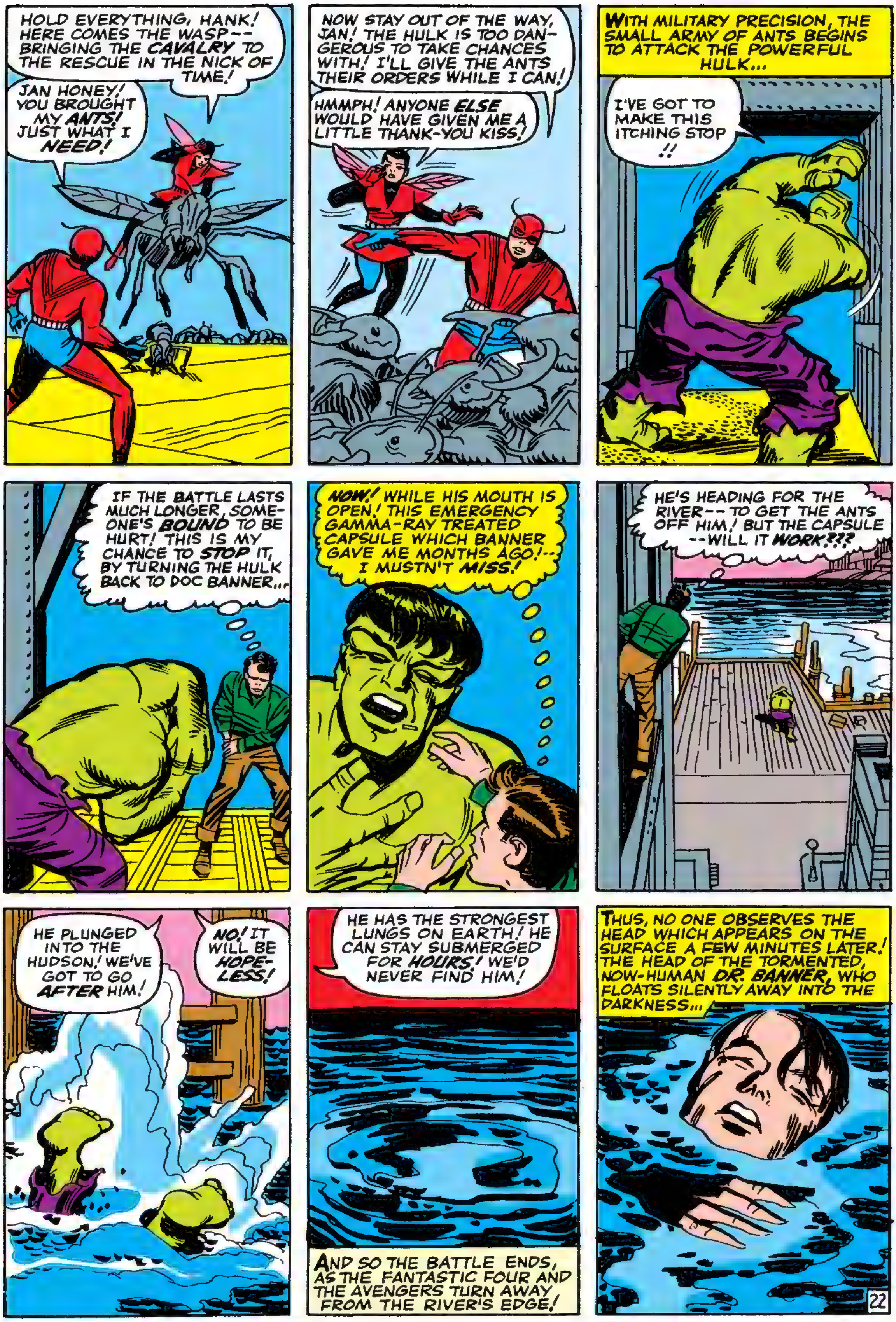

I'M HEADIN' FOR A TUB OF SOFT CEMENT! I'VE GOTTA TRY-TO--TO-- -GLUBBBB!-

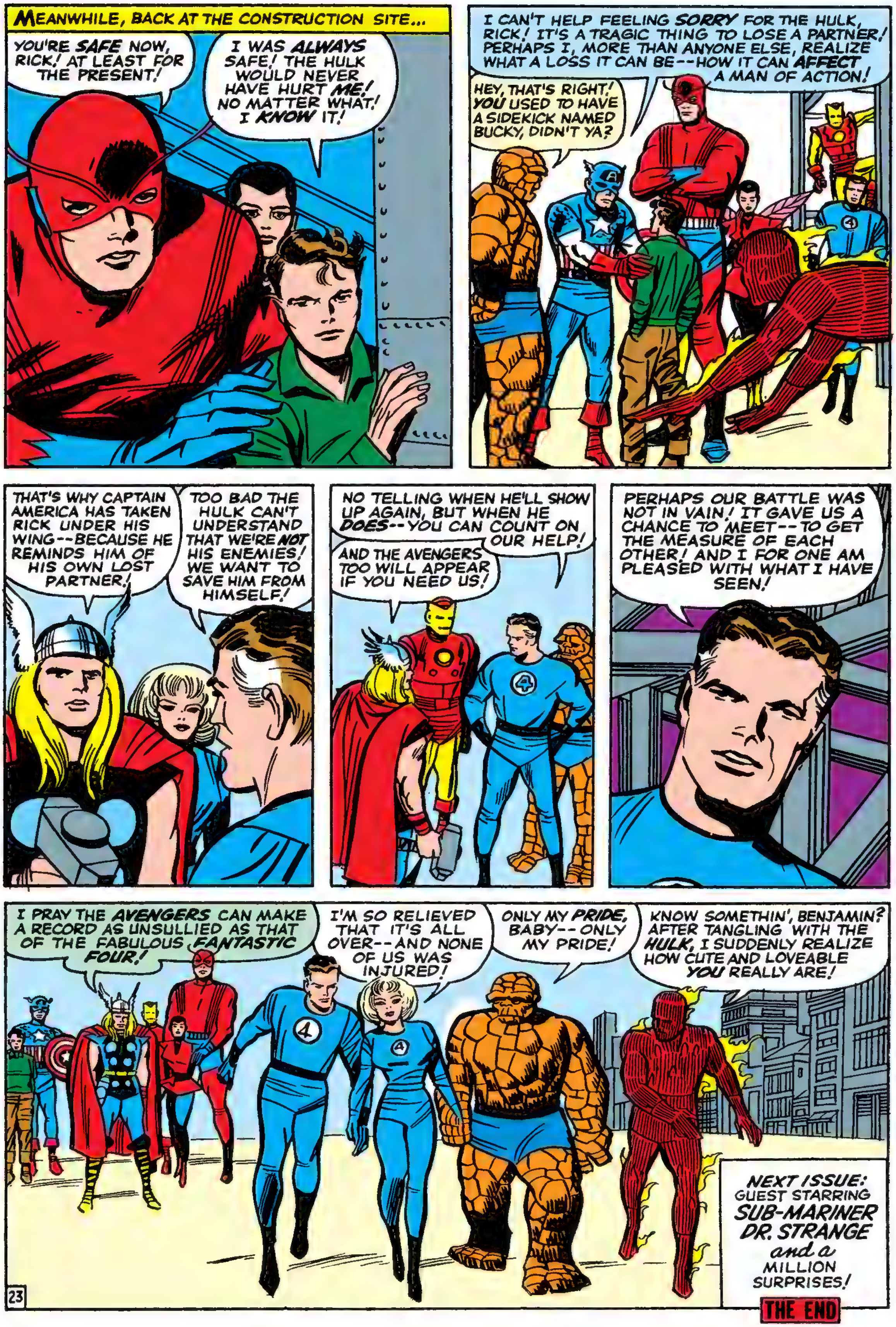

THIS IS EXTREMELY HUMILIATIN'!! MY FRANTIC FANS WON'T RECOGNIZE ME IF I DON'T GET OUTTA THIS STUFF!
STAY WHERE YOU ARE, THING! I'LL GET YOU OUT OF THAT CEMENT-- I'LL KNOCK YOU OUT OF IT!

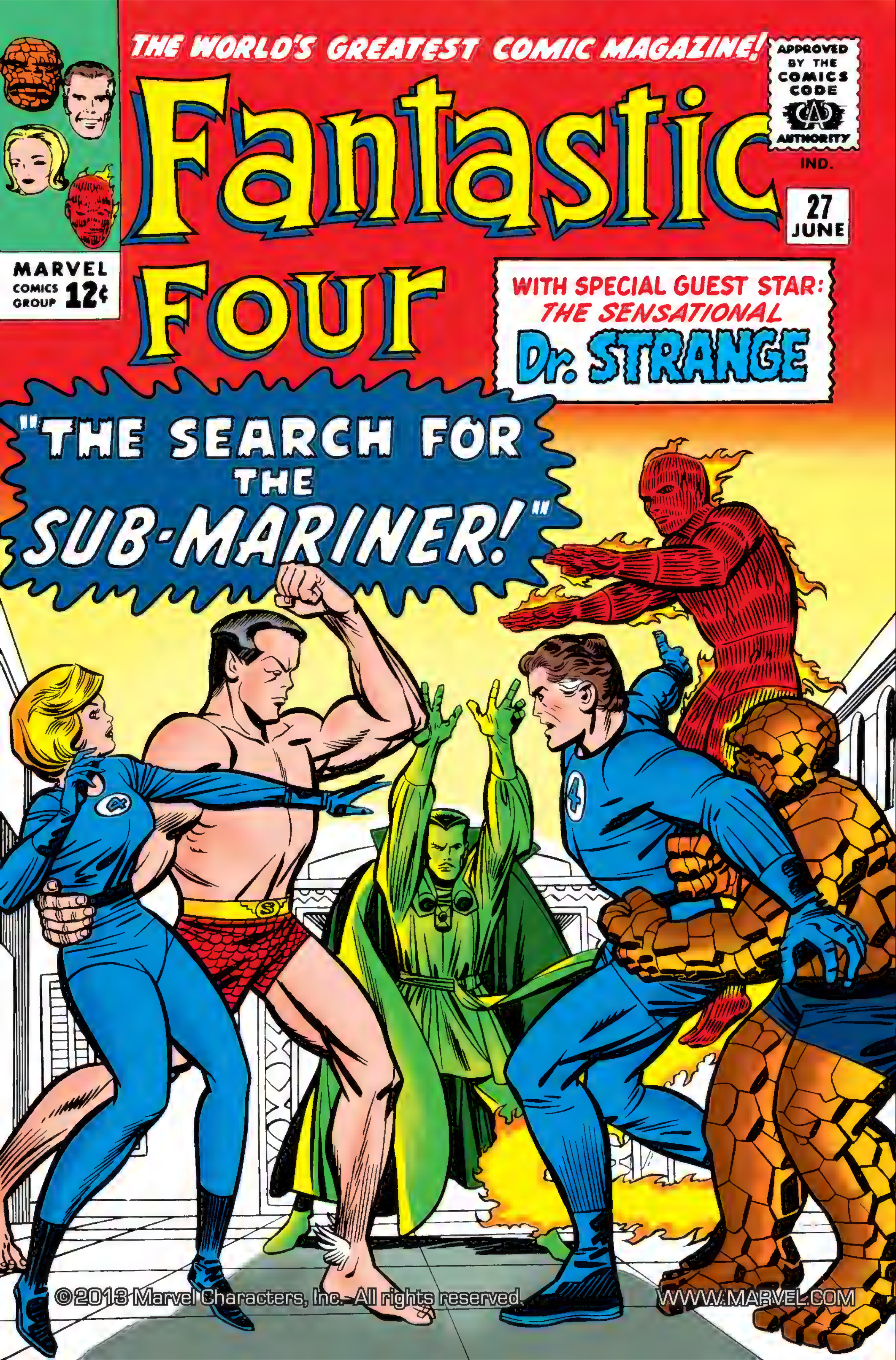

THE THING IS A VALIANT FIGHTER-- TOO VALIANT FOR CAPTAIN AMERICA TO ALLOW HIM TO BE DEFEATED!
HUH?? SO-- IT'S YOU!


CATCHING THE MASSIVE IRON BALL, THE HULK HURLS IT *BACK* AGAIN TOWARDS THE AGILE CAPTAIN AMERICA WHO EASILY DODGES IT!
YOU'RE THE ONE WHO TRIED TO GET RICK AWAY FROM ME! YOU'LL *PAY FOR* THAT!!
I ADMIRE YOUR DETERMINATION, BUT IT'S GOING TO TAKE MORE THAN BRUTE STRENGTH TO MAKE *ME* SAY UNCLE!
AS A MATTER OF FACT, ANY EX-ARMY COMBAT MAN KNOWS THAT IF HE APPLIES *JUDO*, THE STRONGER HIS ENEMY IS, THE MORE IT HELPS THE UNDER-DOG!
BECAUSE, USING MUSCULAR LEVERAGE, THE SKILLED FIGHTER CAN TURN THE FORCE OF HIS ENEMY'S STRENGTH *AGAINST* HIM!
DO I MAKE MYSELF *CLEAR?*
YOU *TALK* A GOOD FIGHT, MASKED MAN! BUT THAT DOESN'T PAY OFF AT THE FINISH!
I DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU PLAN TO DO WITH THAT GRAPPLING CABLE --BUT I'LL SHOW YOU I CAN DO *MORE* THAN JUST TALK--!
THUNK!
BAH! IF YOU THINK *CIRCUS TRICKS* MEAN ANYTHING, *I* CAN DO THEM *TOO!*


ALL RIGHT, MASKED MAN! NOW JUST STAY THERE! I'M COMING UP TO FINISH THIS!
BUT SUDDENLY, A GIGANTIC HAND REACHES OUT, AND...
HULK, IT'S TIME YOU REALIZED THAT YOU CAN'T DEFEAT EVERY-BODY!
YOU!
YOUR WRONG, GIANT-MAN! AS LONG AS I HAVE MY STRENGTH, I CAN DEFEAT EVERYBODY! I CAN SMASH ANYTHING THAT LIVES!
YOU FORGOT-- EVEN THOUGH I'M ONLY HALF YOUR SIZE, I'M MANY TIMES STRONGER! AND I'LL PROVE IT NOW!
TIME FOR A SHRINKING CAPSULE-- FAST!
IT'LL ONLY TAKE ONE PUNCH TO-- HUH?? WHERE'D HE GO???
AND NOW FOR ANOTHER GROWTH PILL!
HERE I AM, LITTLE MAN! RIGHT BEHIND YOU!
THWACK!
I DON'T KNOW HOW YOU DID IT-- BUT IT'S NOT GONNA HELP YOU!! WHA--?? AGAIN??!!
IF MY PILLS HOLD OUT, MAYBE I CAN WEAR HIM OUT THIS WAY!
BUT, AS THE STRANGE BATTLE RAGES, GIANT-MAN LEARNS THAT THE HULK IS NEARLY INEXHAUSTIBLE! HIS INCREDIBLE STRENGTH SEEMS TO INCREASE DURING THE STRAIN OF COMBAT!
I'LL GET YOU SOONER OR LATER! THE FIRST MISTAKE YOU MAKE WILL BE YOUR LAST!


HOLD EVERYTHING, HANK! HERE COMES THE WASP-- BRINGING THE *CAVALRY* TO THE RESCUE IN THE NICK OF TIME!
JAN HONEY! YOU BROUGHT MY *ANTS!* JUST WHAT I *NEED!*
NOW STAY OUT OF THE WAY, JAN! THE HULK IS TOO DANGEROUS TO TAKE CHANCES WITH! I'LL GIVE THE ANTS THEIR ORDERS WHILE I CAN!
HMMPH! ANYONE *ELSE* WOULD HAVE GIVEN ME A LITTLE THANK-YOU KISS!
WITH MILITARY PRECISION, THE SMALL ARMY OF ANTS BEGINS TO ATTACK THE POWERFUL HULK...
I'VE GOT TO MAKE THIS ITCHING STOP !!
IF THE BATTLE LASTS MUCH LONGER, SOMEONE'S *BOUND* TO BE HURT! THIS IS MY CHANCE TO *STOP* IT, BY TURNING THE HULK BACK TO DOC BANNER...
NOW! WHILE HIS MOUTH IS OPEN! THIS EMERGENCY GAMMA-RAY TREATED CAPSULE WHICH BANNER GAVE ME MONTHS AGO!-- I MUSTN'T *MISS!*
HE'S HEADING FOR THE RIVER-- TO GET THE ANTS OFF HIM! BUT THE CAPSULE --WILL IT *WORK???*
HE PLUNGED INTO THE HUDSON! WE'VE GOT TO GO *AFTER* HIM!
NO! IT WILL BE *HOPELESS!*
HE HAS THE STRONGEST LUNGS ON EARTH! HE CAN STAY SUBMERGED FOR *HOURS!* WE'D NEVER FIND HIM!
AND SO THE BATTLE ENDS, AS THE FANTASTIC FOUR AND THE AVENGERS TURN AWAY FROM THE RIVER'S EDGE!
THUS, NO ONE OBSERVES THE HEAD WHICH APPEARS ON THE SURFACE A FEW MINUTES LATER! THE HEAD OF THE TORMENTED, NOW-HUMAN *DR. BANNER,* WHO FLOATS SILENTLY AWAY INTO THE DARKNESS...


MEANWHILE, BACK AT THE CONSTRUCTION SITE...
YOU'RE **SAFE** NOW, RICK! AT LEAST FOR THE PRESENT!
I WAS **ALWAYS** SAFE! THE HULK WOULD NEVER HAVE HURT **ME!** NO MATTER WHAT! I **KNOW** IT!
I CAN'T HELP FEELING **SORRY** FOR THE HULK, RICK! IT'S A TRAGIC THING TO LOSE A PARTNER! PERHAPS I, MORE THAN ANYONE ELSE, REALIZE WHAT A LOSS IT CAN BE--HOW IT CAN **AFFECT** A MAN OF ACTION!
HEY, THAT'S RIGHT! **YOU** USED TO HAVE A SIDEKICK NAMED BUCKY, DIDN'T YA?
THAT'S WHY CAPTAIN AMERICA HAS TAKEN RICK UNDER HIS WING--BECAUSE HE REMINDS HIM OF HIS OWN LOST PARTNER!
TOO BAD THE HULK CAN'T UNDERSTAND THAT WE'RE **NOT** HIS ENEMIES! WE WANT TO SAVE HIM FROM HIMSELF!
NO TELLING WHEN HE'LL SHOW UP AGAIN, BUT WHEN HE **DOES**--YOU CAN COUNT ON OUR HELP!
AND THE AVENGERS TOO WILL APPEAR IF YOU NEED US!
PERHAPS OUR BATTLE WAS NOT IN VAIN! IT GAVE US A CHANCE TO MEET--TO GET THE MEASURE OF EACH OTHER! AND I FOR ONE AM PLEASED WITH WHAT I HAVE SEEN!
I PRAY THE **AVENGERS** CAN MAKE A RECORD AS UNSULLIED AS THAT OF THE FABULOUS **FANTASTIC FOUR!**
I'M SO RELIEVED THAT IT'S ALL OVER--AND NONE OF US WAS INJURED!
ONLY MY **PRIDE**, BABY--ONLY MY PRIDE!
KNOW SOMETHIN', BENJAMIN? AFTER TANGLING WITH THE **HULK**, I SUDDENLY REALIZE HOW CUTE AND LOVEABLE **YOU** REALLY ARE!
NEXT ISSUE: GUEST STARRING **SUB-MARINER DR. STRANGE** *and a* MILLION SURPRISES!
THE END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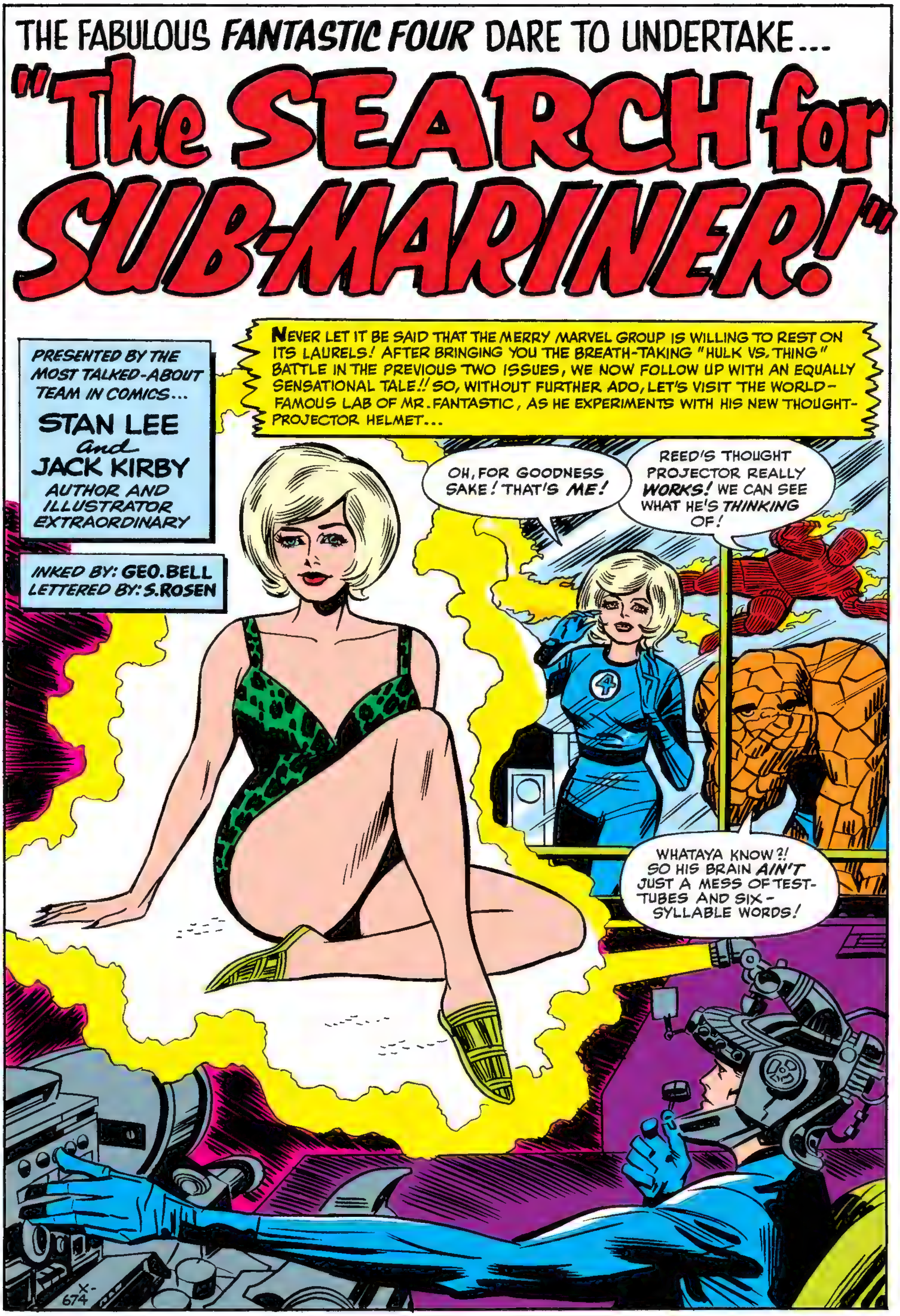
THE FABULOUS FANTASTIC FOUR DARE TO UNDERTAKE...
"The SEARCH for SUB-MARINER!"
NEVER LET IT BE SAID THAT THE MERRY MARVEL GROUP IS WILLING TO REST ON ITS LAURELS! AFTER BRINGING YOU THE BREATH-TAKING "HULK VS. THING" BATTLE IN THE PREVIOUS TWO ISSUES, WE NOW FOLLOW UP WITH AN EQUALLY SENSATIONAL TALE!! SO, WITHOUT FURTHER ADO, LET'S VISIT THE WORLD-FAMOUS LAB OF MR. FANTASTIC, AS HE EXPERIMENTS WITH HIS NEW THOUGHT-PROJECTOR HELMET...
PRESENTED BY THE MOST TALKED-ABOUT TEAM IN COMICS... STAN LEE and JACK KIRBY AUTHOR AND ILLUSTRATOR EXTRAORDINARY
INKED BY: GEO. BELL LETTERED BY: S. ROSEN
OH, FOR GOODNESS SAKE! THAT'S ME!
REED'S THOUGHT PROJECTOR REALLY WORKS! WE CAN SEE WHAT HE'S THINKING OF!
WHATAYA KNOW?! SO HIS BRAIN AIN'T JUST A MESS OF TEST-TUBES AND SIX-SYLLABLE WORDS!
X-674

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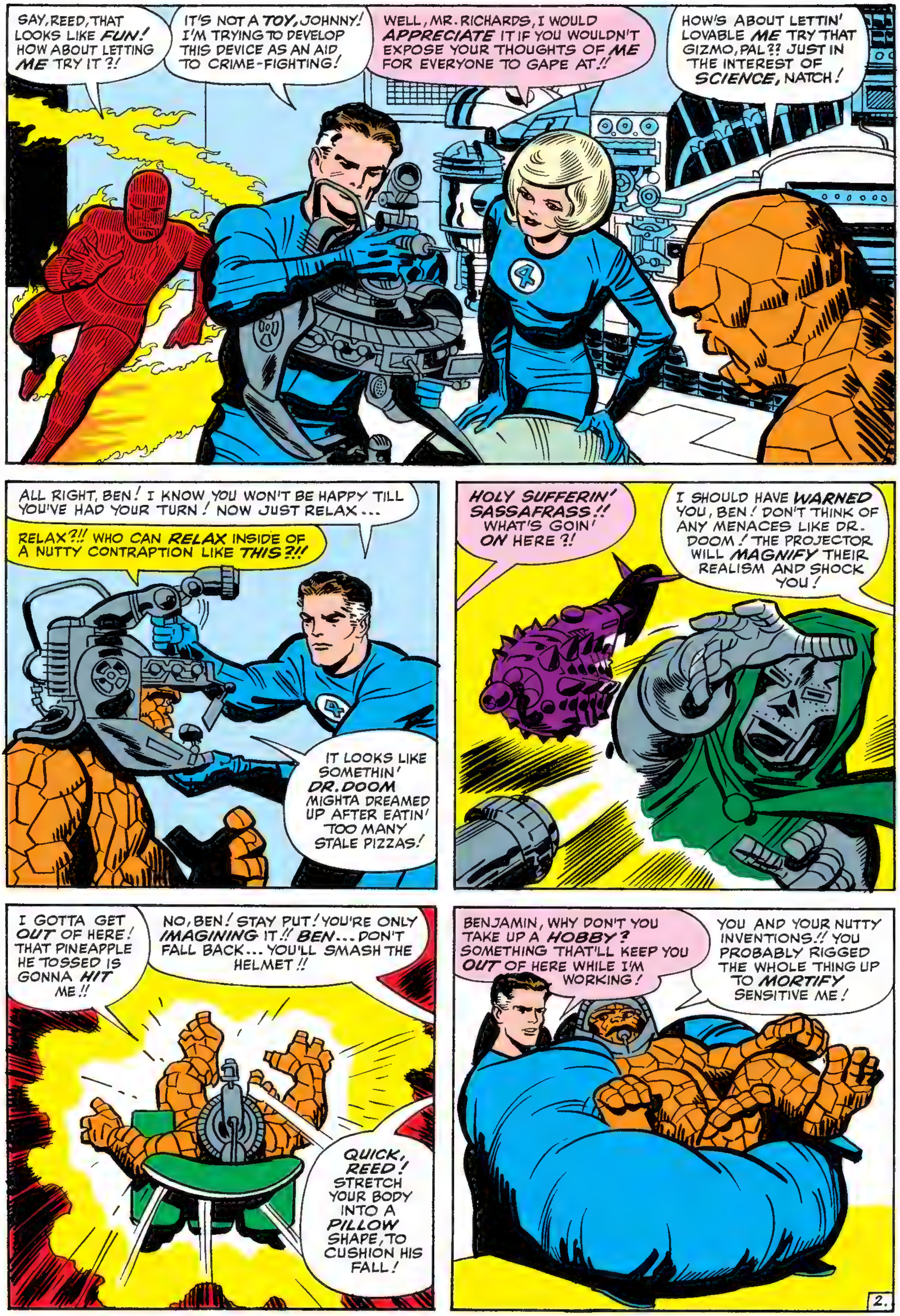
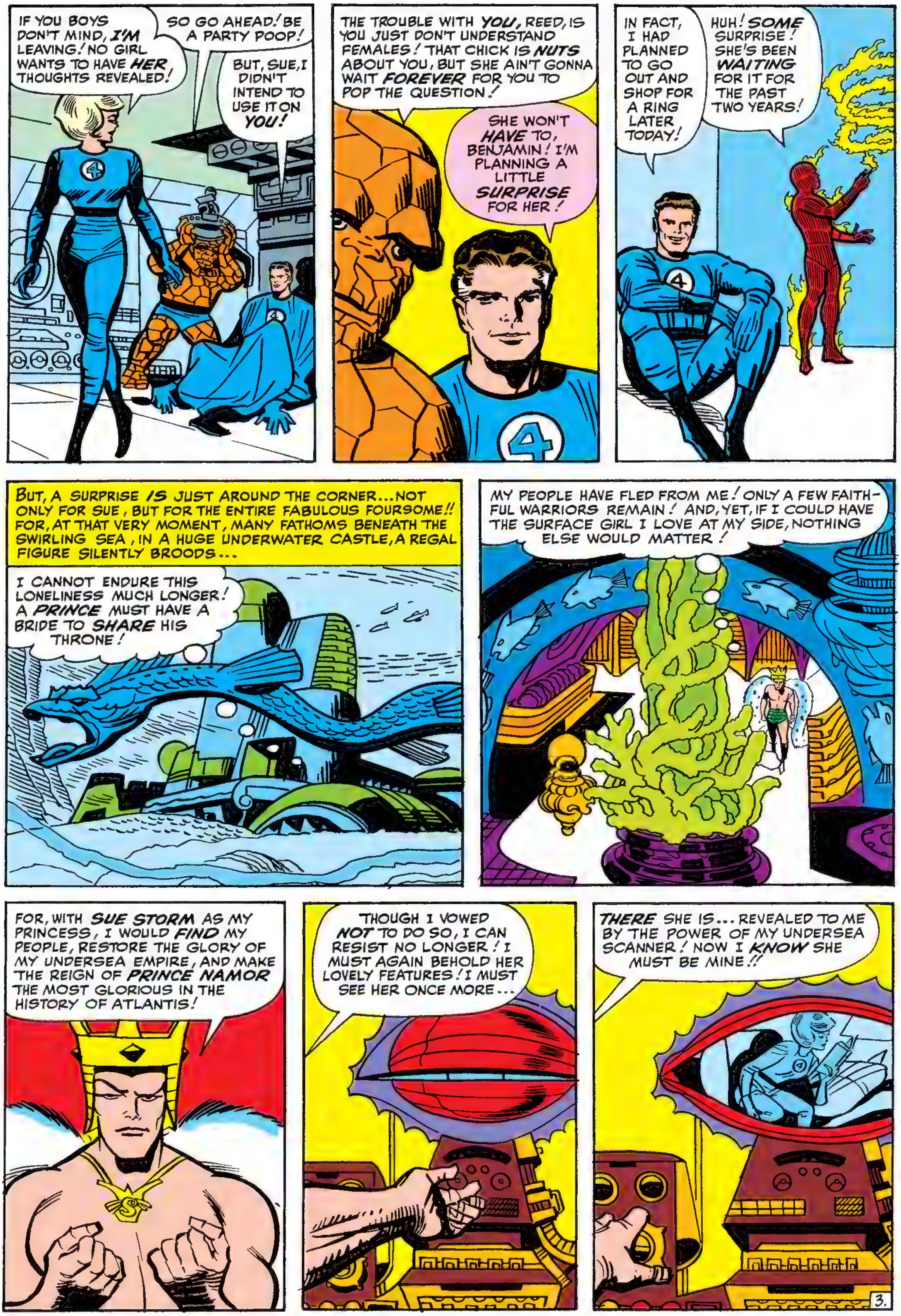
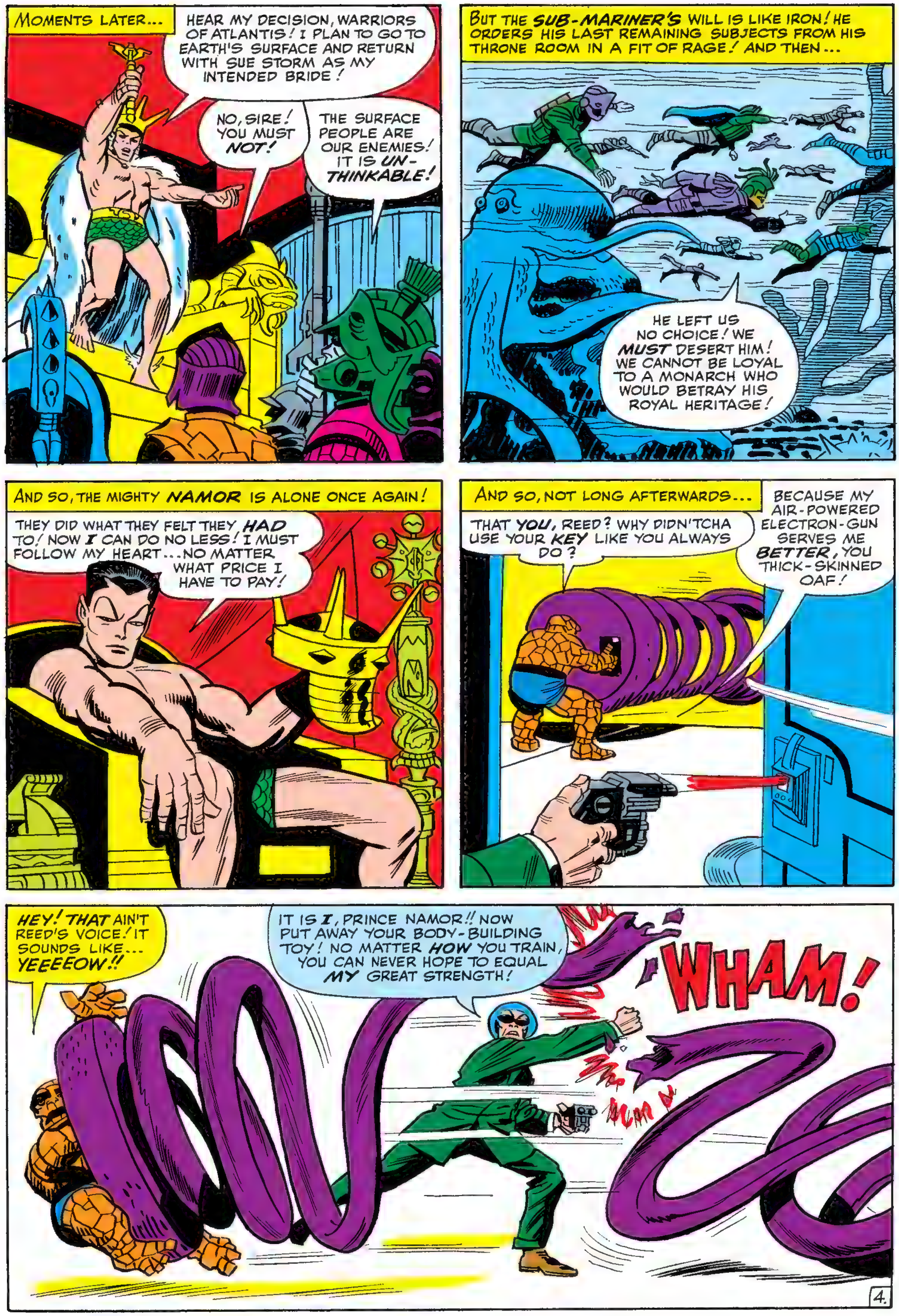
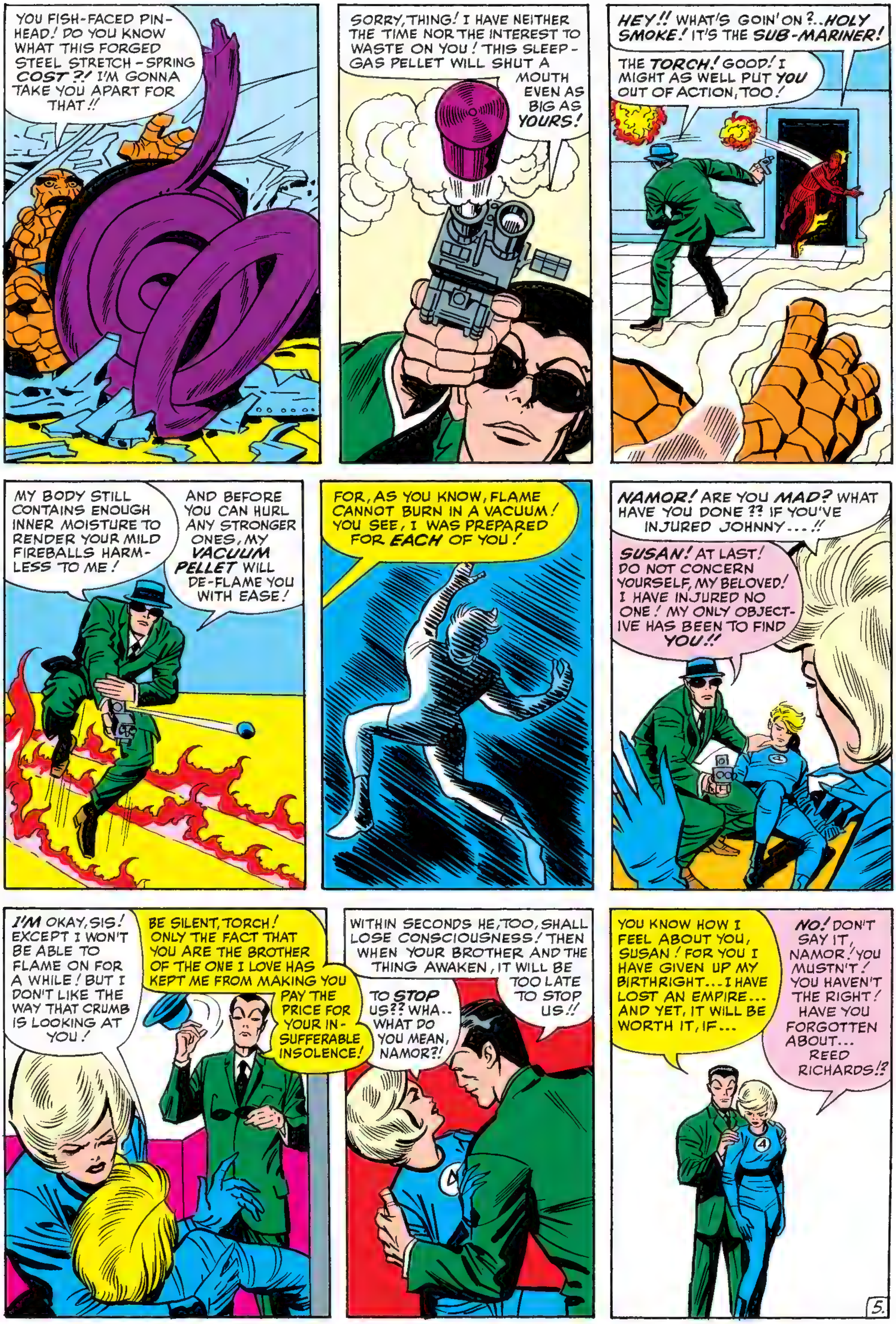
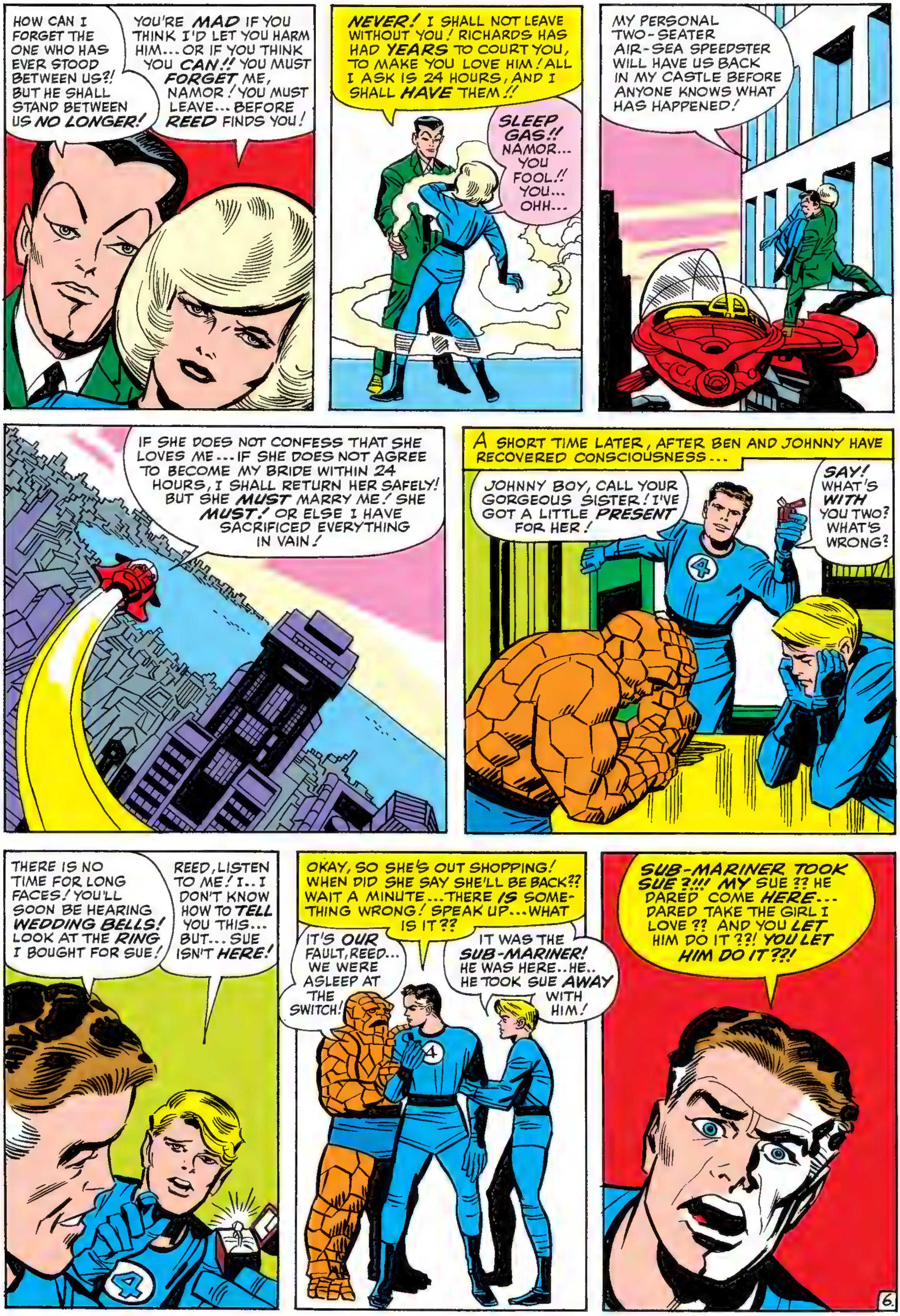
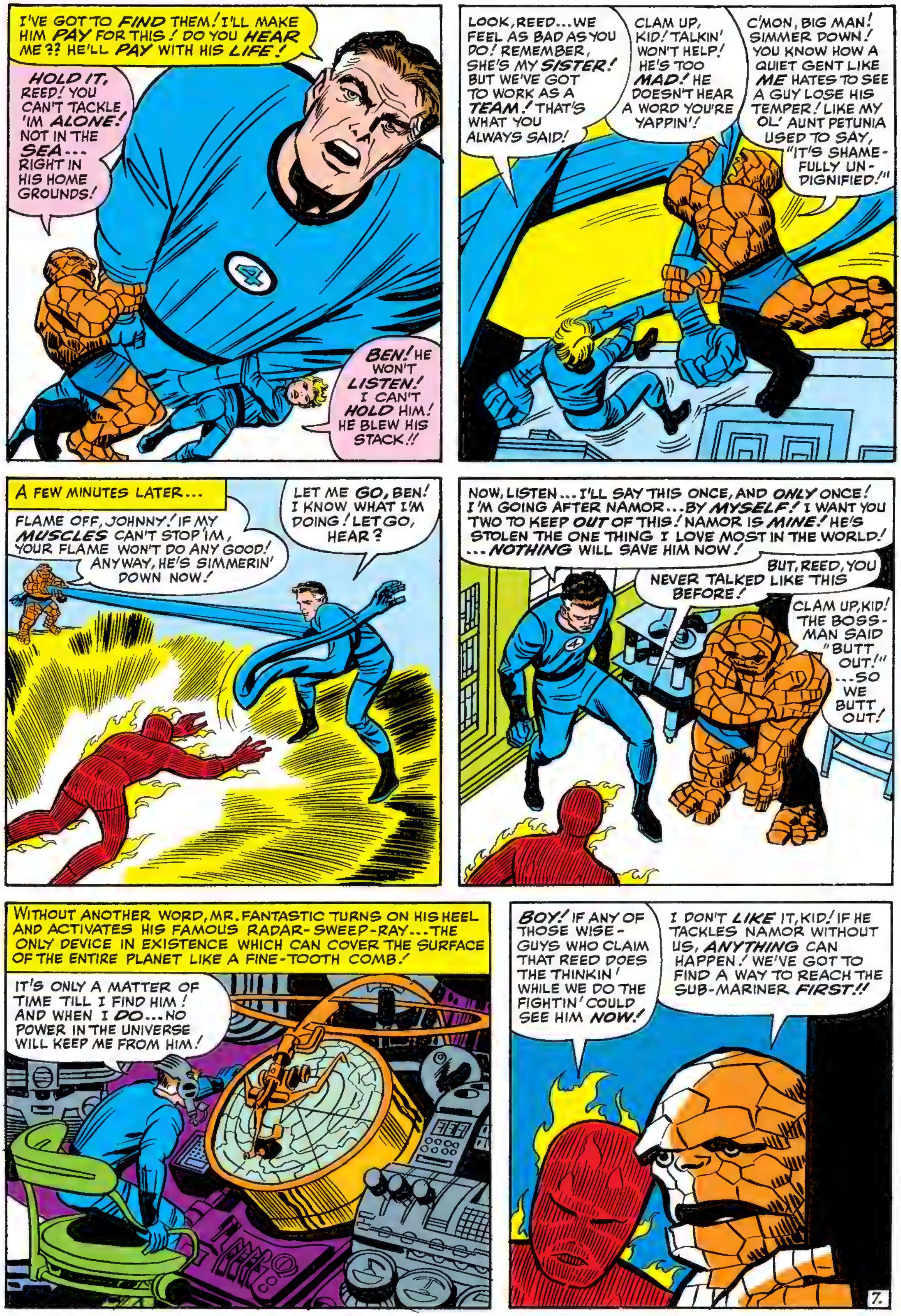

SAY, REED, THAT LOOKS LIKE FUN! HOW ABOUT LETTING ME TRY IT?!
IT'S NOT A TOY, JOHNNY! I'M TRYING TO DEVELOP THIS DEVICE AS AN AID TO CRIME-FIGHTING!
WELL, MR. RICHARDS, I WOULD APPRECIATE IT IF YOU WOULDN'T EXPOSE YOUR THOUGHTS OF ME FOR EVERYONE TO GAPE AT!!
HOW'S ABOUT LETTIN' LOVABLE ME TRY THAT GIZMO, PAL?? JUST IN THE INTEREST OF SCIENCE, NATCH!
ALL RIGHT, BEN! I KNOW YOU WON'T BE HAPPY TILL YOU'VE HAD YOUR TURN! NOW JUST RELAX...
RELAX?!! WHO CAN RELAX INSIDE OF A NUTTY CONTRAPTION LIKE THIS?!!
IT LOOKS LIKE SOMETHIN' DR. DOOM MIGHTA DREAMED UP AFTER EATIN' TOO MANY STALE PIZZAS!
HOLY SUFFERIN' SASSAFRASS!! WHAT'S GOIN' ON HERE?!
I SHOULD HAVE WARNED YOU, BEN! DON'T THINK OF ANY MENACES LIKE DR. DOOM! THE PROJECTOR WILL MAGNIFY THEIR REALISM AND SHOCK YOU!
I GOTTA GET OUT OF HERE! THAT PINEAPPLE HE TOSSED IS GONNA HIT ME!!
NO, BEN! STAY PUT! YOU'RE ONLY IMAGINING IT!! BEN... DON'T FALL BACK... YOU'LL SMASH THE HELMET!!
QUICK, REED! STRETCH YOUR BODY INTO A PILLOW SHAPE, TO CUSHION HIS FALL!
BENJAMIN, WHY DON'T YOU TAKE UP A HOBBY? SOMETHING THAT'LL KEEP YOU OUT OF HERE WHILE I'M WORKING!
YOU AND YOUR NUTTY INVENTIONS!! YOU PROBABLY RIGGED THE WHOLE THING UP TO MORTIFY SENSITIVE ME!

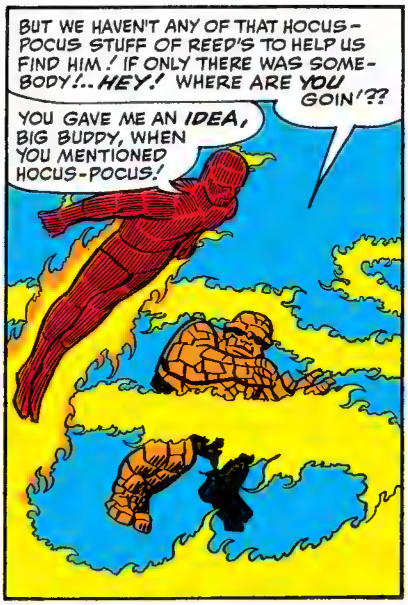

IF YOU BOYS DON'T MIND, *I'M* LEAVING! NO GIRL WANTS TO HAVE *HER* THOUGHTS REVEALED!
SO GO AHEAD! BE A PARTY POOP!
BUT, SUE, I DIDN'T INTEND TO USE IT ON *YOU!*
THE TROUBLE WITH *YOU,* REED, IS YOU JUST DON'T UNDERSTAND FEMALES! THAT CHICK IS *NUTS* ABOUT YOU, BUT SHE AIN'T GONNA WAIT *FOREVER* FOR YOU TO POP THE QUESTION!
SHE WON'T *HAVE* TO, BENJAMIN! I'M PLANNING A LITTLE *SURPRISE* FOR HER!
IN FACT, I HAD PLANNED TO GO OUT AND SHOP FOR A RING LATER TODAY!
HUH! *SOME* SURPRISE! SHE'S BEEN *WAITING* FOR IT FOR THE PAST TWO YEARS!
BUT, A SURPRISE *IS* JUST AROUND THE CORNER... NOT ONLY FOR SUE, BUT FOR THE ENTIRE FABULOUS FOURSOME!! FOR, AT THAT VERY MOMENT, MANY FATHOMS BENEATH THE SWIRLING SEA, IN A HUGE UNDERWATER CASTLE, A REGAL FIGURE SILENTLY BROODS...
I CANNOT ENDURE THIS LONELINESS MUCH LONGER! A *PRINCE* MUST HAVE A BRIDE TO *SHARE* HIS THRONE!
MY PEOPLE HAVE FLED FROM ME! ONLY A FEW FAITHFUL WARRIORS REMAIN! AND, YET, IF I COULD HAVE THE SURFACE GIRL I LOVE AT MY SIDE, NOTHING ELSE WOULD MATTER!
FOR, WITH *SUE STORM* AS MY PRINCESS, I WOULD *FIND* MY PEOPLE, RESTORE THE GLORY OF MY UNDERSEA EMPIRE, AND MAKE THE REIGN OF *PRINCE NAMOR* THE MOST GLORIOUS IN THE HISTORY OF ATLANTIS!
THOUGH I VOWED *NOT* TO DO SO, I CAN RESIST NO LONGER! I MUST AGAIN BEHOLD HER LOVELY FEATURES! I MUST SEE HER ONCE MORE...
THERE SHE IS... REVEALED TO ME BY THE POWER OF MY UNDERSEA SCANNER! NOW I *KNOW* SHE MUST BE MINE!!

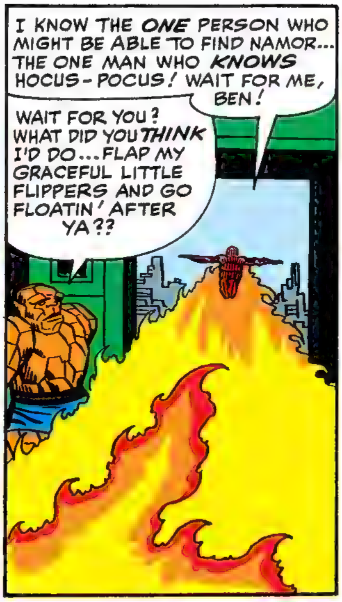

MOMENTS LATER...
HEAR MY DECISION, WARRIORS OF ATLANTIS! I PLAN TO GO TO EARTH'S SURFACE AND RETURN WITH SUE STORM AS MY INTENDED BRIDE!
NO, SIRE! YOU MUST *NOT!*
THE SURFACE PEOPLE ARE OUR ENEMIES! IT IS *UN-THINKABLE!*
BUT THE *SUB-MARINER'S* WILL IS LIKE IRON! HE ORDERS HIS LAST REMAINING SUBJECTS FROM HIS THRONE ROOM IN A FIT OF RAGE! AND THEN...
HE LEFT US NO CHOICE! WE *MUST* DESERT HIM! WE CANNOT BE LOYAL TO A MONARCH WHO WOULD BETRAY HIS ROYAL HERITAGE!
AND SO, THE MIGHTY *NAMOR* IS ALONE ONCE AGAIN!
THEY DID WHAT THEY FELT THEY *HAD* TO! NOW *I* CAN DO NO LESS! I MUST FOLLOW MY HEART...NO MATTER WHAT PRICE I HAVE TO PAY!
AND SO, NOT LONG AFTERWARDS...
THAT *YOU*, REED? WHY DIDN'TCHA USE YOUR *KEY* LIKE YOU ALWAYS DO?
BECAUSE MY AIR-POWERED ELECTRON-GUN SERVES ME *BETTER*, YOU THICK-SKINNED OAF!
HEY! THAT AIN'T REED'S VOICE! IT SOUNDS LIKE... *YEEEEOW!!*
IT IS *I*, PRINCE NAMOR!! NOW PUT AWAY YOUR BODY-BUILDING TOY! NO MATTER *HOW* YOU TRAIN, YOU CAN NEVER HOPE TO EQUAL *MY* GREAT STRENGTH!
WHAM!

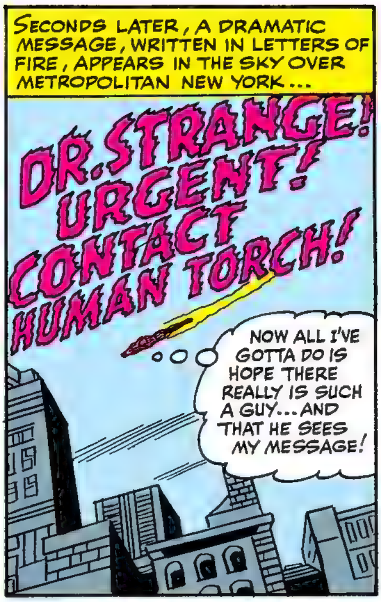

YOU FISH-FACED PIN-HEAD! DO YOU KNOW WHAT THIS FORGED STEEL STRETCH-SPRING COST?! I'M GONNA TAKE YOU APART FOR THAT!!
SORRY, THING! I HAVE NEITHER THE TIME NOR THE INTEREST TO WASTE ON YOU! THIS SLEEP-GAS PELLET WILL SHUT A MOUTH EVEN AS BIG AS YOURS!
HEY!! WHAT'S GOIN' ON?..HOLY SMOKE! IT'S THE SUB-MARINER!
THE TORCH! GOOD! I MIGHT AS WELL PUT YOU OUT OF ACTION, TOO!
MY BODY STILL CONTAINS ENOUGH INNER MOISTURE TO RENDER YOUR MILD FIREBALLS HARMLESS TO ME!
AND BEFORE YOU CAN HURL ANY STRONGER ONES, MY VACUUM PELLET WILL DE-FLAME YOU WITH EASE!
FOR, AS YOU KNOW, FLAME CANNOT BURN IN A VACUUM! YOU SEE, I WAS PREPARED FOR EACH OF YOU!
NAMOR! ARE YOU MAD? WHAT HAVE YOU DONE?? IF YOU'VE INJURED JOHNNY...!!
SUSAN! AT LAST! DO NOT CONCERN YOURSELF, MY BELOVED! I HAVE INJURED NO ONE! MY ONLY OBJECTIVE HAS BEEN TO FIND YOU!!
I'M OKAY, SIS! EXCEPT I WON'T BE ABLE TO FLAME ON FOR A WHILE! BUT I DON'T LIKE THE WAY THAT CRUMB IS LOOKING AT YOU!
BE SILENT, TORCH! ONLY THE FACT THAT YOU ARE THE BROTHER OF THE ONE I LOVE HAS KEPT ME FROM MAKING YOU PAY THE PRICE FOR YOUR INSUFFERABLE INSOLENCE!
WITHIN SECONDS HE, TOO, SHALL LOSE CONSCIOUSNESS! THEN WHEN YOUR BROTHER AND THE THING AWAKEN, IT WILL BE TOO LATE TO STOP US!!
TO STOP US?? WHA.. WHAT DO YOU MEAN, NAMOR?!
YOU KNOW HOW I FEEL ABOUT YOU, SUSAN! FOR YOU I HAVE GIVEN UP MY BIRTHRIGHT...I HAVE LOST AN EMPIRE... AND YET, IT WILL BE WORTH IT, IF...
NO! DON'T SAY IT, NAMOR! YOU MUSTN'T! YOU HAVEN'T THE RIGHT! HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN ABOUT... REED RICHARDS!?

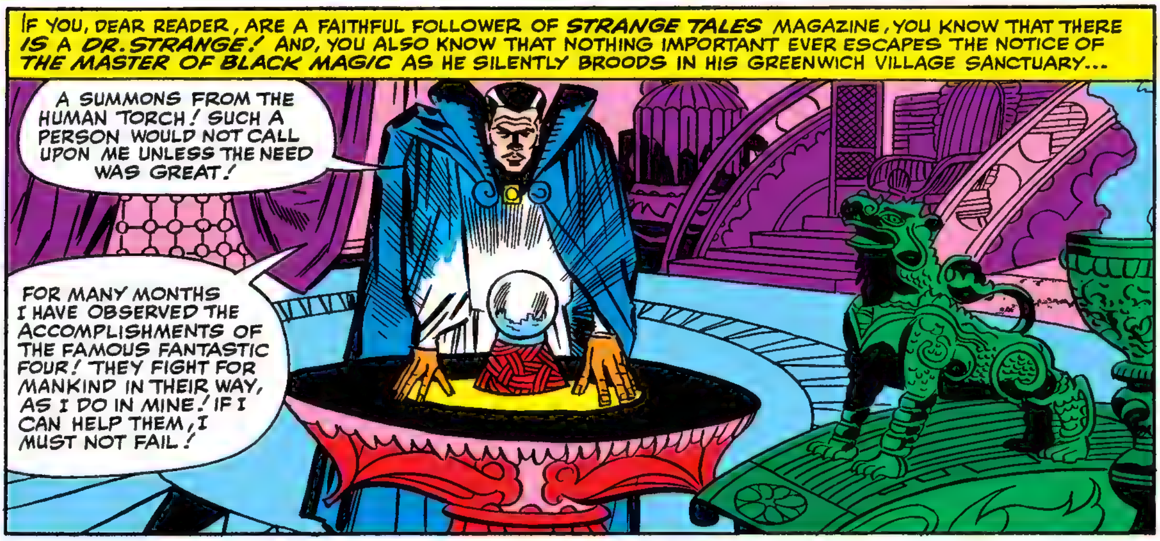

HOW CAN I FORGET THE ONE WHO HAS EVER STOOD BETWEEN US?! BUT HE SHALL STAND BETWEEN US NO LONGER!
YOU'RE MAD IF YOU THINK I'D LET YOU HARM HIM... OR IF YOU THINK YOU CAN!! YOU MUST FORGET ME, NAMOR! YOU MUST LEAVE... BEFORE REED FINDS YOU!
NEVER! I SHALL NOT LEAVE WITHOUT YOU! RICHARDS HAS HAD YEARS TO COURT YOU, TO MAKE YOU LOVE HIM! ALL I ASK IS 24 HOURS, AND I SHALL HAVE THEM!!
SLEEP GAS!! NAMOR... YOU FOOL!! YOU... OHH...
MY PERSONAL TWO-SEATER AIR-SEA SPEEDSTER WILL HAVE US BACK IN MY CASTLE BEFORE ANYONE KNOWS WHAT HAS HAPPENED!
IF SHE DOES NOT CONFESS THAT SHE LOVES ME... IF SHE DOES NOT AGREE TO BECOME MY BRIDE WITHIN 24 HOURS, I SHALL RETURN HER SAFELY! BUT SHE MUST MARRY ME! SHE MUST! OR ELSE I HAVE SACRIFICED EVERYTHING IN VAIN!
A SHORT TIME LATER, AFTER BEN AND JOHNNY HAVE RECOVERED CONSCIOUSNESS...
JOHNNY BOY, CALL YOUR GORGEOUS SISTER! I'VE GOT A LITTLE PRESENT FOR HER!
SAY! WHAT'S WITH YOU TWO? WHAT'S WRONG?
THERE IS NO TIME FOR LONG FACES! YOU'LL SOON BE HEARING WEDDING BELLS! LOOK AT THE RING I BOUGHT FOR SUE!
REED, LISTEN TO ME! I.. I DON'T KNOW HOW TO TELL YOU THIS... BUT... SUE ISN'T HERE!
OKAY, SO SHE'S OUT SHOPPING! WHEN DID SHE SAY SHE'LL BE BACK?? WAIT A MINUTE... THERE IS SOMETHING WRONG! SPEAK UP... WHAT IS IT??
IT'S OUR FAULT, REED... WE WERE ASLEEP AT THE SWITCH!
IT WAS THE SUB-MARINER! HE WAS HERE.. HE.. HE TOOK SUE AWAY WITH HIM!
SUB-MARINER TOOK SUE ?!!! MY SUE ?? HE DARED COME HERE... DARED TAKE THE GIRL I LOVE ?? AND YOU LET HIM DO IT ??! YOU LET HIM DO IT ??!
6.

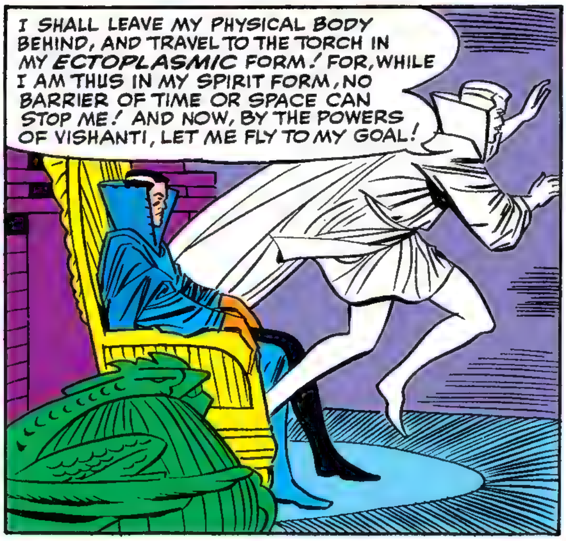

I'VE GOT TO FIND THEM! I'LL MAKE HIM PAY FOR THIS! DO YOU HEAR ME?? HE'LL PAY WITH HIS LIFE!
HOLD IT, REED! YOU CAN'T TACKLE 'IM ALONE! NOT IN THE SEA... RIGHT IN HIS HOME GROUNDS!
BEN! HE WON'T LISTEN! I CAN'T HOLD HIM! HE BLEW HIS STACK!!
LOOK, REED... WE FEEL AS BAD AS YOU DO! REMEMBER, SHE'S MY SISTER! BUT WE'VE GOT TO WORK AS A TEAM! THAT'S WHAT YOU ALWAYS SAID!
CLAM UP, KID! TALKIN' WON'T HELP! HE'S TOO MAD! HE DOESN'T HEAR A WORD YOU'RE YAPPIN'!
C'MON, BIG MAN! SIMMER DOWN! YOU KNOW HOW A QUIET GENT LIKE ME HATES TO SEE A GUY LOSE HIS TEMPER! LIKE MY OL' AUNT PETUNIA USED TO SAY, "IT'S SHAMEFULLY UNDIGNIFIED!"
A FEW MINUTES LATER...
FLAME OFF, JOHNNY! IF MY MUSCLES CAN'T STOP 'IM, YOUR FLAME WON'T DO ANY GOOD! ANYWAY, HE'S SIMMERIN' DOWN NOW!
LET ME GO, BEN! I KNOW WHAT I'M DOING! LET GO, HEAR?
NOW, LISTEN... I'LL SAY THIS ONCE, AND ONLY ONCE! I'M GOING AFTER NAMOR... BY MYSELF! I WANT YOU TWO TO KEEP OUT OF THIS! NAMOR IS MINE! HE'S STOLEN THE ONE THING I LOVE MOST IN THE WORLD! ...NOTHING WILL SAVE HIM NOW!
BUT, REED, YOU NEVER TALKED LIKE THIS BEFORE!
CLAM UP, KID! THE BOSS-MAN SAID "BUTT OUT!" ...SO WE BUTT OUT!
WITHOUT ANOTHER WORD, MR. FANTASTIC TURNS ON HIS HEEL AND ACTIVATES HIS FAMOUS RADAR-SWEEP-RAY... THE ONLY DEVICE IN EXISTENCE WHICH CAN COVER THE SURFACE OF THE ENTIRE PLANET LIKE A FINE-TOOTH COMB!
IT'S ONLY A MATTER OF TIME TILL I FIND HIM! AND WHEN I DO... NO POWER IN THE UNIVERSE WILL KEEP ME FROM HIM!
BOY! IF ANY OF THOSE WISE-GUYS WHO CLAIM THAT REED DOES THE THINKIN' WHILE WE DO THE FIGHTIN' COULD SEE HIM NOW!
I DON'T LIKE IT, KID! IF HE TACKLES NAMOR WITHOUT US, ANYTHING CAN HAPPEN! WE'VE GOT TO FIND A WAY TO REACH THE SUB-MARINER FIRST!!

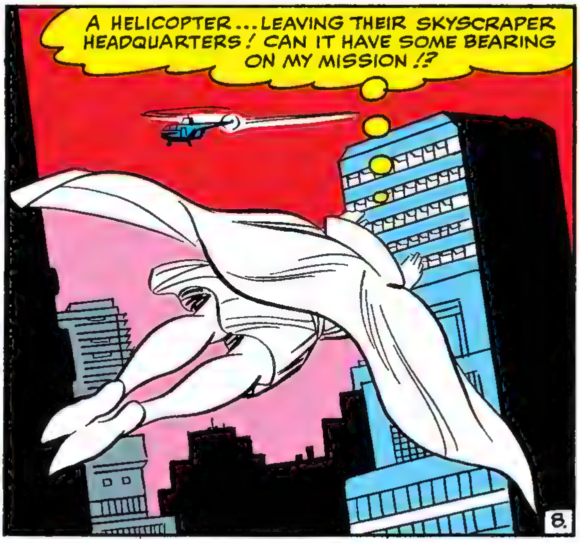

BUT WE HAVEN'T ANY OF THAT HOCUS-POCUS STUFF OF REED'S TO HELP US FIND HIM! IF ONLY THERE WAS SOMEBODY!..**HEY!** WHERE ARE **YOU** GOIN'??
YOU GAVE ME AN **IDEA,** BIG BUDDY, WHEN YOU MENTIONED HOCUS-POCUS!

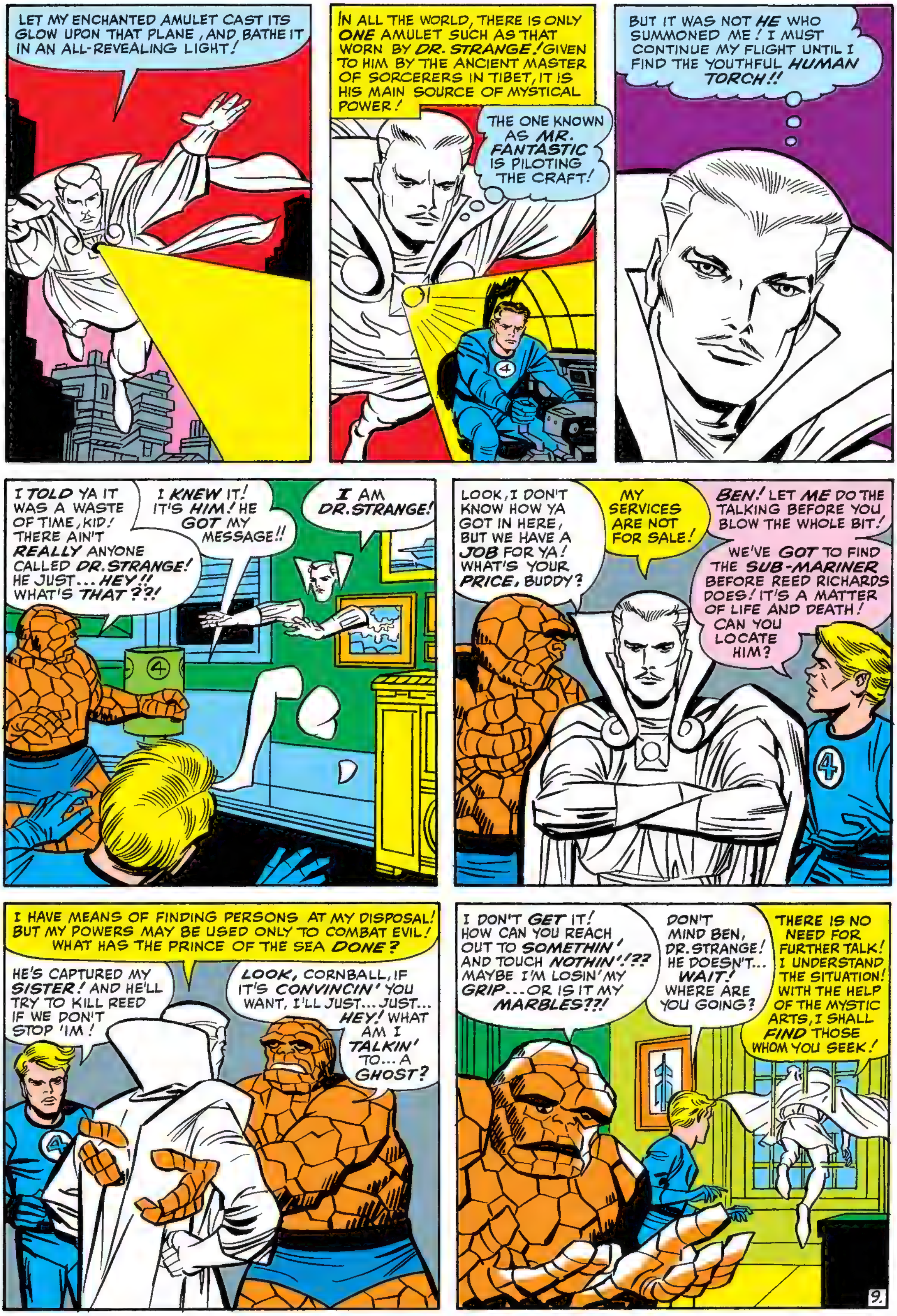

I KNOW THE **ONE** PERSON WHO MIGHT BE ABLE TO FIND NAMOR... THE ONE MAN WHO **KNOWS** HOCUS-POCUS! WAIT FOR ME, BEN!
WAIT FOR YOU? WHAT DID YOU **THINK** I'D DO...FLAP MY GRACEFUL LITTLE FLIPPERS AND GO FLOATIN' AFTER YA??

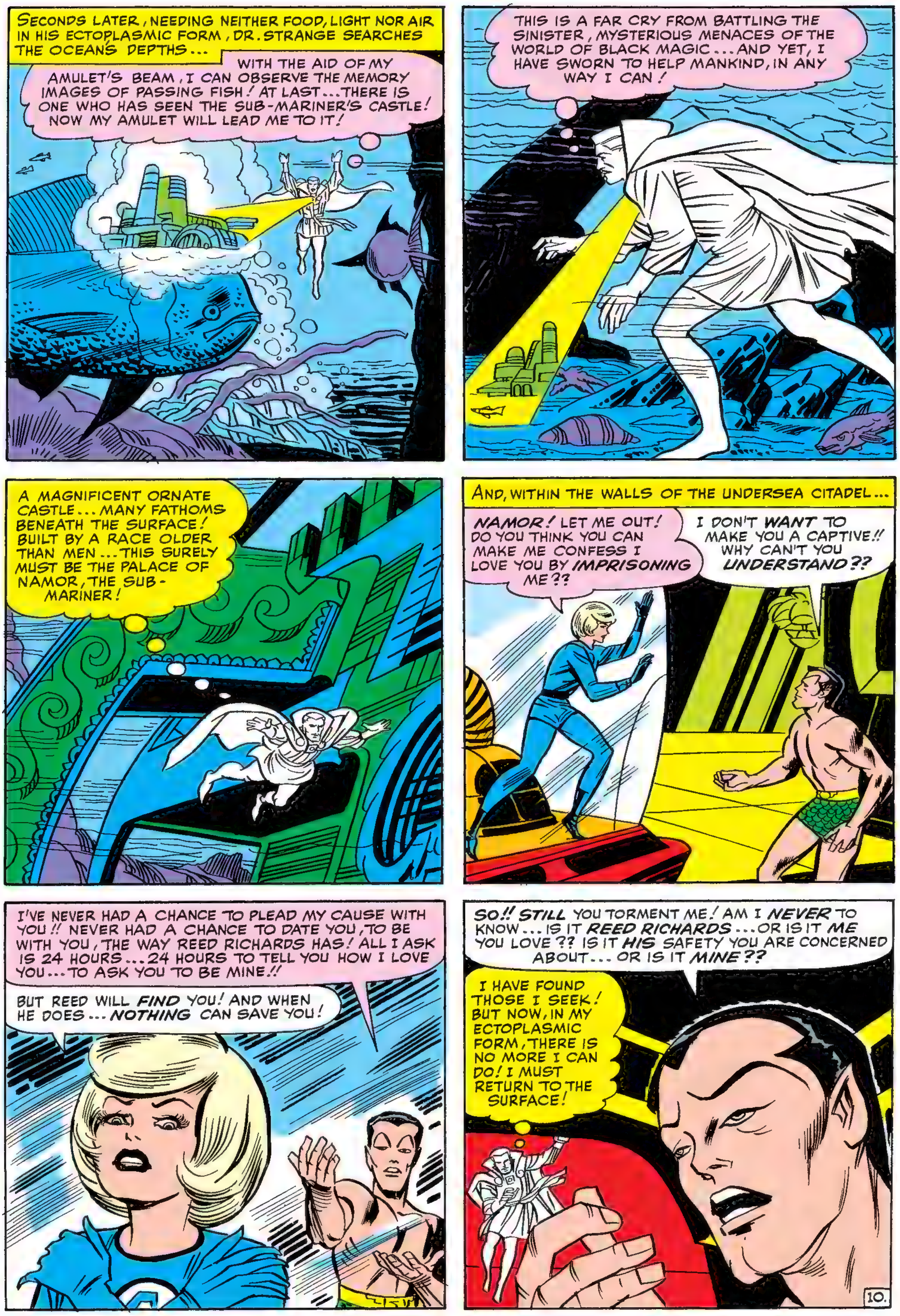

SECONDS LATER, A DRAMATIC MESSAGE, WRITTEN IN LETTERS OF FIRE, APPEARS IN THE SKY OVER METROPOLITAN NEW YORK...
DR. STRANGE! URGENT! CONTACT HUMAN TORCH!
NOW ALL I'VE GOTTA DO IS HOPE THERE REALLY IS SUCH A GUY...AND THAT HE SEES MY MESSAGE!

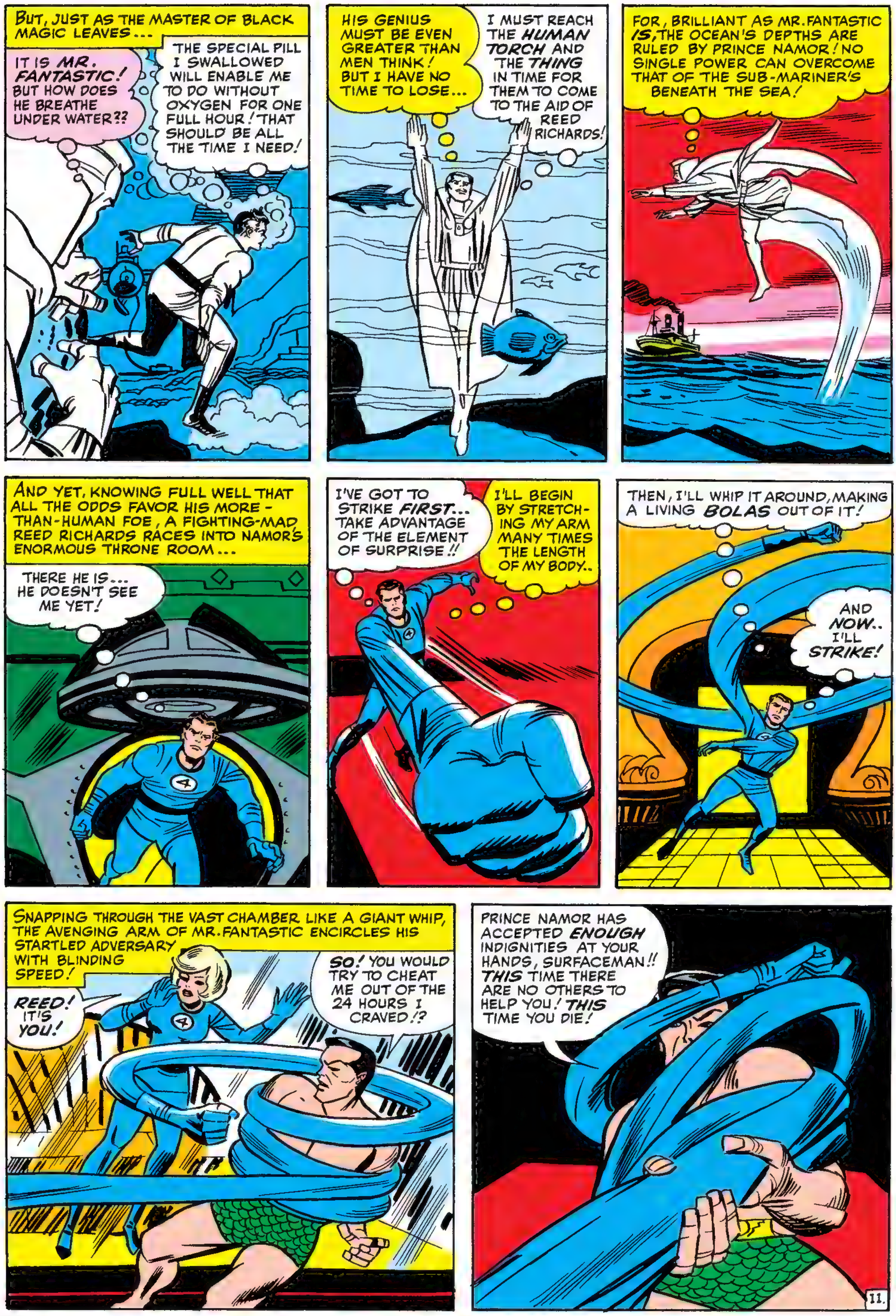

IF YOU, DEAR READER, ARE A FAITHFUL FOLLOWER OF **STRANGE TALES** MAGAZINE, YOU KNOW THAT THERE **IS** A **DR. STRANGE!** AND, YOU ALSO KNOW THAT NOTHING IMPORTANT EVER ESCAPES THE NOTICE OF **THE MASTER OF BLACK MAGIC** AS HE SILENTLY BROODS IN HIS GREENWICH VILLAGE SANCTUARY...
A SUMMONS FROM THE HUMAN TORCH! SUCH A PERSON WOULD NOT CALL UPON ME UNLESS THE NEED WAS GREAT!
FOR MANY MONTHS I HAVE OBSERVED THE ACCOMPLISHMENTS OF THE FAMOUS FANTASTIC FOUR! THEY FIGHT FOR MANKIND IN THEIR WAY, AS I DO IN MINE! IF I CAN HELP THEM, I MUST NOT FAIL!

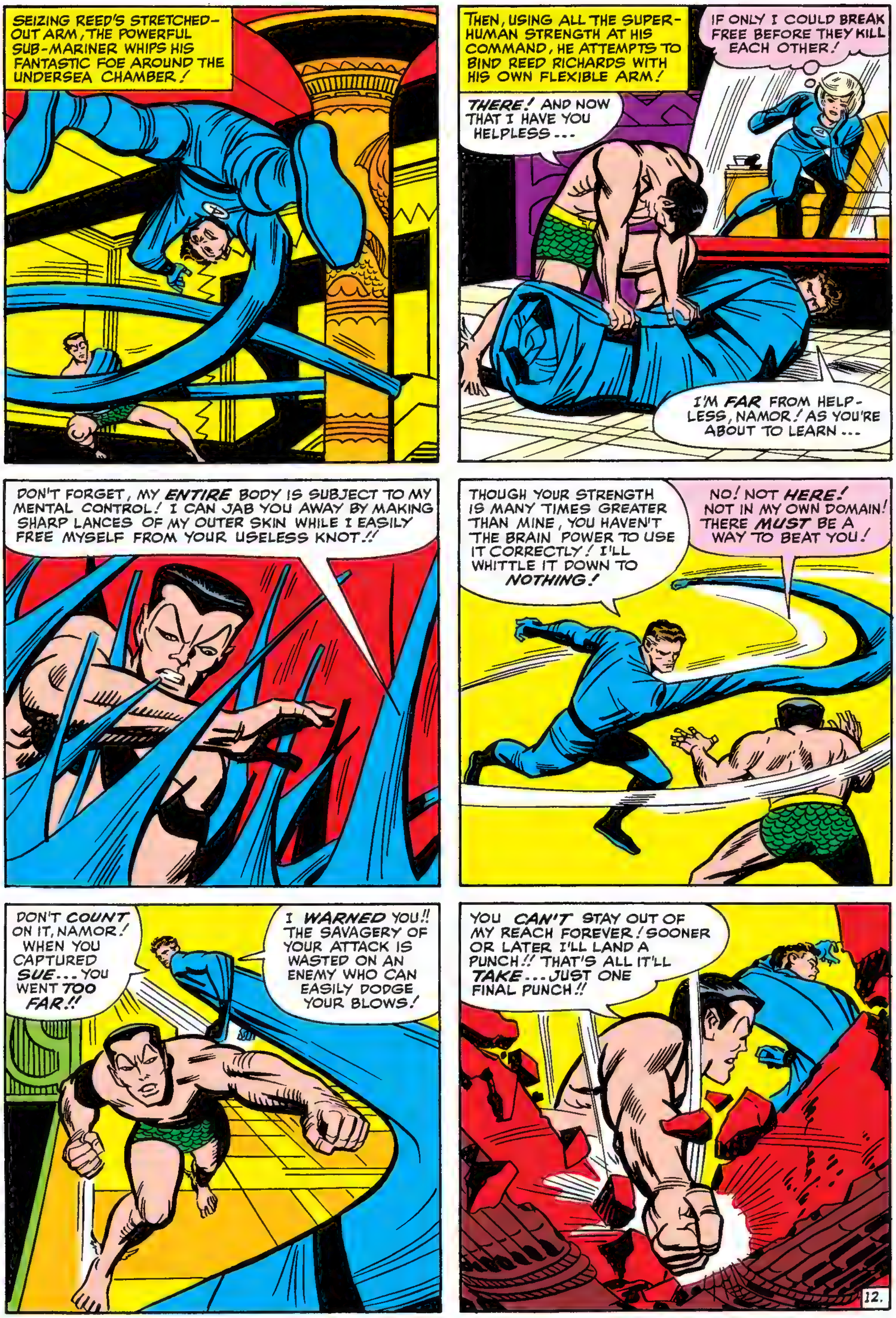

I SHALL LEAVE MY PHYSICAL BODY BEHIND, AND TRAVEL TO THE TORCH IN MY **ECTOPLASMIC** FORM! FOR, WHILE I AM THUS IN MY SPIRIT FORM, NO BARRIER OF TIME OR SPACE CAN STOP ME! AND NOW, BY THE POWERS OF VISHANTI, LET ME FLY TO MY GOAL!

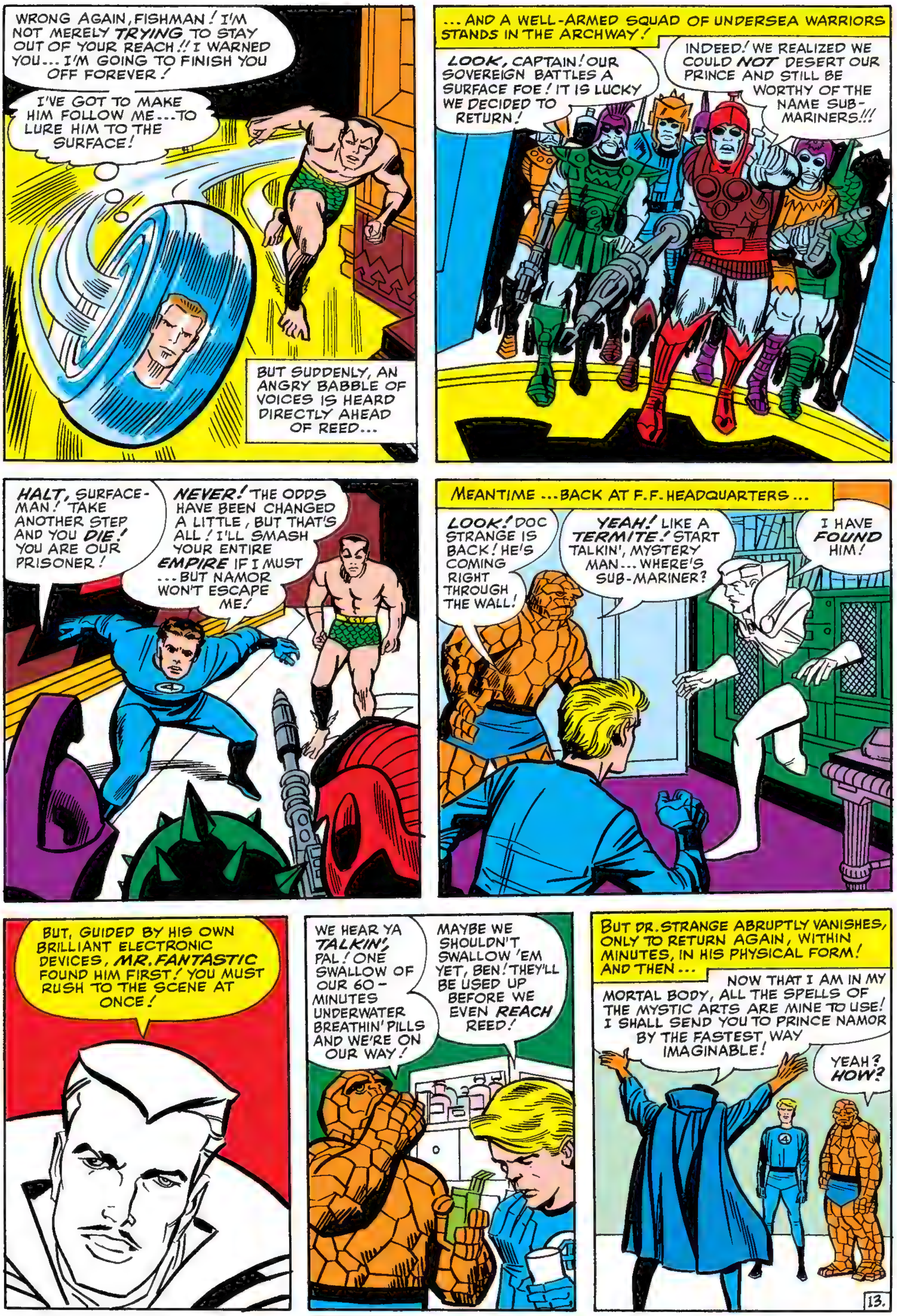

A HELICOPTER...LEAVING THEIR SKYSCRAPER HEADQUARTERS! CAN IT HAVE SOME BEARING ON MY MISSION!?

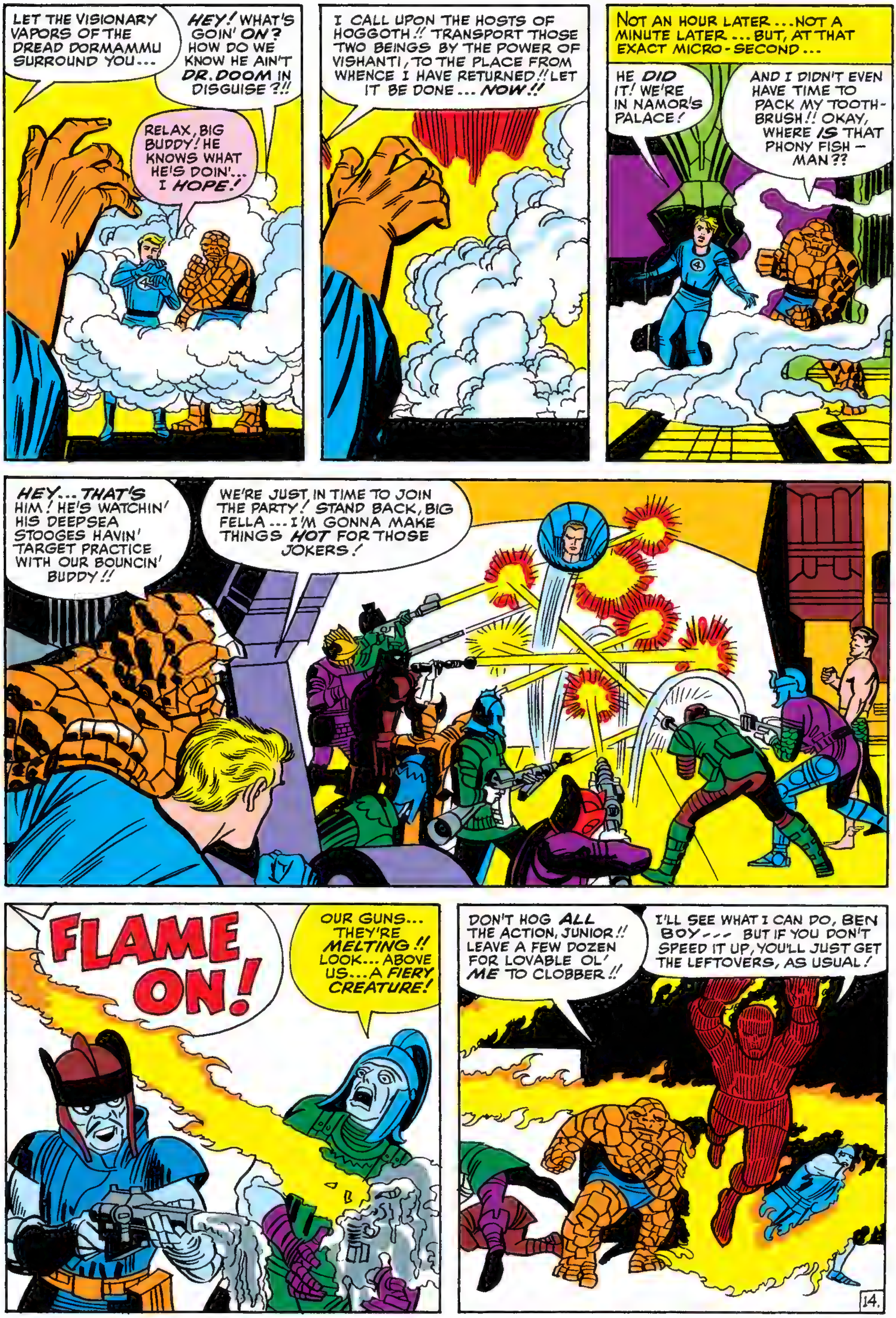

LET MY ENCHANTED AMULET CAST ITS GLOW UPON THAT PLANE, AND BATHE IT IN AN ALL-REVEALING LIGHT!
IN ALL THE WORLD, THERE IS ONLY ONE AMULET SUCH AS THAT WORN BY DR. STRANGE! GIVEN TO HIM BY THE ANCIENT MASTER OF SORCERERS IN TIBET, IT IS HIS MAIN SOURCE OF MYSTICAL POWER!
THE ONE KNOWN AS MR. FANTASTIC IS PILOTING THE CRAFT!
BUT IT WAS NOT HE WHO SUMMONED ME! I MUST CONTINUE MY FLIGHT UNTIL I FIND THE YOUTHFUL HUMAN TORCH!!
I TOLD YA IT WAS A WASTE OF TIME, KID! THERE AIN'T REALLY ANYONE CALLED DR. STRANGE! HE JUST... HEY!! WHAT'S THAT??!
I KNEW IT! IT'S HIM! HE GOT MY MESSAGE!!
I AM DR. STRANGE!
LOOK, I DON'T KNOW HOW YA GOT IN HERE, BUT WE HAVE A JOB FOR YA! WHAT'S YOUR PRICE, BUDDY?
MY SERVICES ARE NOT FOR SALE!
BEN! LET ME DO THE TALKING BEFORE YOU BLOW THE WHOLE BIT!
WE'VE GOT TO FIND THE SUB-MARINER BEFORE REED RICHARDS DOES! IT'S A MATTER OF LIFE AND DEATH! CAN YOU LOCATE HIM?
I HAVE MEANS OF FINDING PERSONS AT MY DISPOSAL! BUT MY POWERS MAY BE USED ONLY TO COMBAT EVIL! WHAT HAS THE PRINCE OF THE SEA DONE?
HE'S CAPTURED MY SISTER! AND HE'LL TRY TO KILL REED IF WE DON'T STOP 'IM!
LOOK, CORNBALL, IF IT'S CONVINCIN' YOU WANT, I'LL JUST... JUST... HEY! WHAT AM I TALKIN' TO... A GHOST?
I DON'T GET IT! HOW CAN YOU REACH OUT TO SOMETHIN' AND TOUCH NOTHIN'!?? MAYBE I'M LOSIN' MY GRIP... OR IS IT MY MARBLES??!
DON'T MIND BEN, DR. STRANGE! HE DOESN'T... WAIT! WHERE ARE YOU GOING?
THERE IS NO NEED FOR FURTHER TALK! I UNDERSTAND THE SITUATION! WITH THE HELP OF THE MYSTIC ARTS, I SHALL FIND THOSE WHOM YOU SEEK!

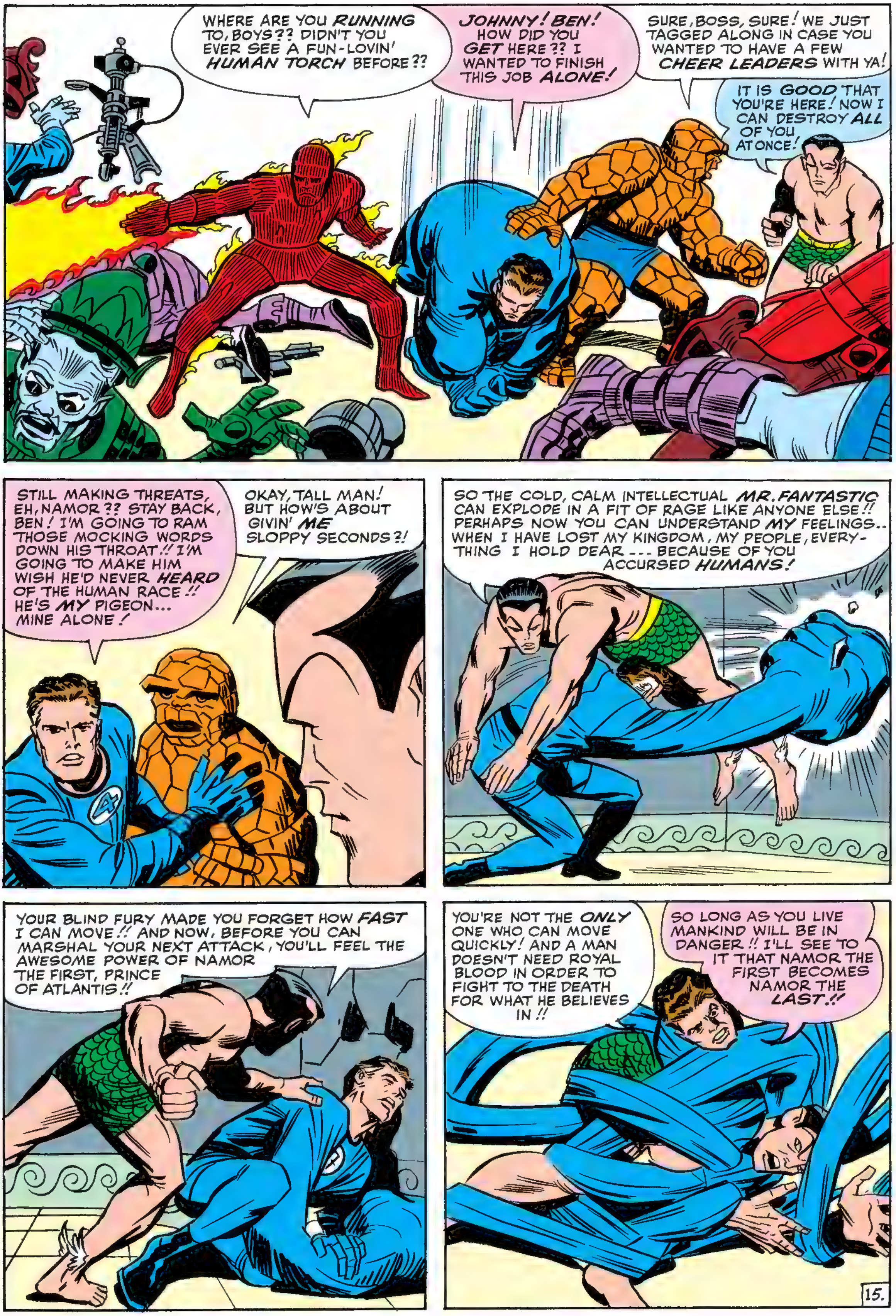

SECONDS LATER, NEEDING NEITHER FOOD, LIGHT NOR AIR IN HIS ECTOPLASMIC FORM, DR. STRANGE SEARCHES THE OCEAN'S DEPTHS...
WITH THE AID OF MY AMULET'S BEAM, I CAN OBSERVE THE MEMORY IMAGES OF PASSING FISH! AT LAST... THERE IS ONE WHO HAS SEEN THE SUB-MARINER'S CASTLE! NOW MY AMULET WILL LEAD ME TO IT!
THIS IS A FAR CRY FROM BATTLING THE SINISTER, MYSTERIOUS MENACES OF THE WORLD OF BLACK MAGIC... AND YET, I HAVE SWORN TO HELP MANKIND, IN ANY WAY I CAN!
A MAGNIFICENT ORNATE CASTLE... MANY FATHOMS BENEATH THE SURFACE! BUILT BY A RACE OLDER THAN MEN... THIS SURELY MUST BE THE PALACE OF NAMOR, THE SUB-MARINER!
AND, WITHIN THE WALLS OF THE UNDERSEA CITADEL...
NAMOR! LET ME OUT! DO YOU THINK YOU CAN MAKE ME CONFESS I LOVE YOU BY IMPRISONING ME??
I DON'T WANT TO MAKE YOU A CAPTIVE!! WHY CAN'T YOU UNDERSTAND??
I'VE NEVER HAD A CHANCE TO PLEAD MY CAUSE WITH YOU!! NEVER HAD A CHANCE TO DATE YOU, TO BE WITH YOU, THE WAY REED RICHARDS HAS! ALL I ASK IS 24 HOURS... 24 HOURS TO TELL YOU HOW I LOVE YOU... TO ASK YOU TO BE MINE!!
BUT REED WILL FIND YOU! AND WHEN HE DOES... NOTHING CAN SAVE YOU!
SO!! STILL YOU TORMENT ME! AM I NEVER TO KNOW... IS IT REED RICHARDS... OR IS IT ME YOU LOVE?? IS IT HIS SAFETY YOU ARE CONCERNED ABOUT... OR IS IT MINE??
I HAVE FOUND THOSE I SEEK! BUT NOW, IN MY ECTOPLASMIC FORM, THERE IS NO MORE I CAN DO! I MUST RETURN TO THE SURFACE!

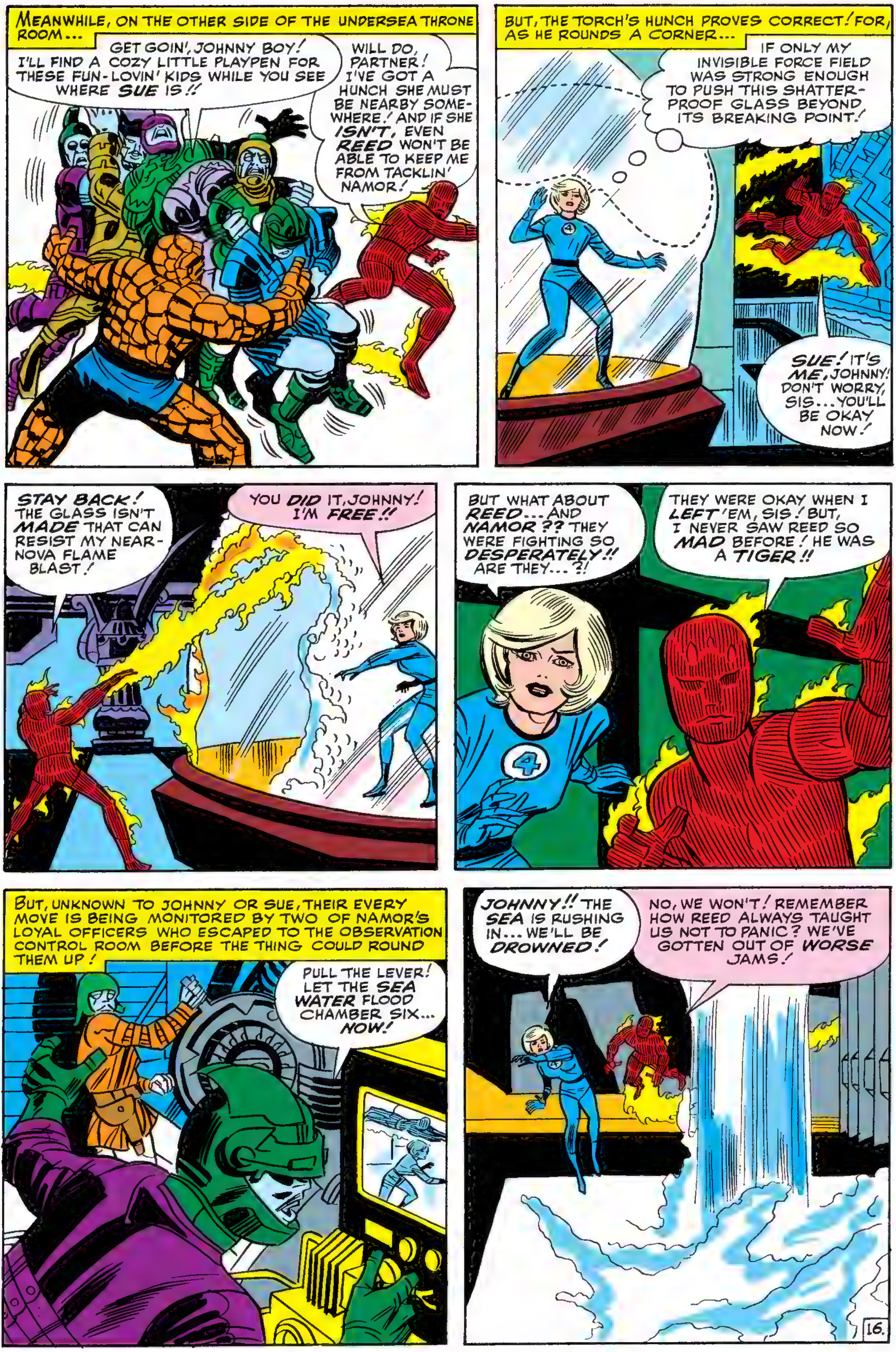

BUT, JUST AS THE MASTER OF BLACK MAGIC LEAVES...
IT IS *MR. FANTASTIC!* BUT HOW DOES HE BREATHE UNDER WATER??
THE SPECIAL PILL I SWALLOWED WILL ENABLE ME TO DO WITHOUT OXYGEN FOR ONE FULL HOUR! THAT SHOULD BE ALL THE TIME I NEED!
HIS GENIUS MUST BE EVEN GREATER THAN MEN THINK! BUT I HAVE NO TIME TO LOSE...
I MUST REACH THE *HUMAN TORCH* AND THE *THING* IN TIME FOR THEM TO COME TO THE AID OF REED RICHARDS!
FOR, BRILLIANT AS MR. FANTASTIC *IS*, THE OCEAN'S DEPTHS ARE RULED BY PRINCE NAMOR! NO SINGLE POWER CAN OVERCOME THAT OF THE SUB-MARINER'S BENEATH THE SEA!
AND YET, KNOWING FULL WELL THAT ALL THE ODDS FAVOR HIS MORE-THAN-HUMAN FOE, A FIGHTING-MAD REED RICHARDS RACES INTO NAMOR'S ENORMOUS THRONE ROOM...
THERE HE IS... HE DOESN'T SEE ME YET!
I'VE GOT TO STRIKE *FIRST*... TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE ELEMENT OF SURPRISE!!
I'LL BEGIN BY STRETCHING MY ARM MANY TIMES THE LENGTH OF MY BODY..
THEN, I'LL WHIP IT AROUND, MAKING A LIVING *BOLAS* OUT OF IT!
AND *NOW*.. I'LL *STRIKE!*
SNAPPING THROUGH THE VAST CHAMBER LIKE A GIANT WHIP, THE AVENGING ARM OF MR. FANTASTIC ENCIRCLES HIS STARTLED ADVERSARY WITH BLINDING SPEED!
REED! IT'S *YOU!*
SO! YOU WOULD TRY TO CHEAT ME OUT OF THE 24 HOURS I CRAVED!?
PRINCE NAMOR HAS ACCEPTED *ENOUGH* INDIGNITIES AT YOUR HANDS, SURFACEMAN!! *THIS* TIME THERE ARE NO OTHERS TO HELP YOU! *THIS* TIME YOU DIE!

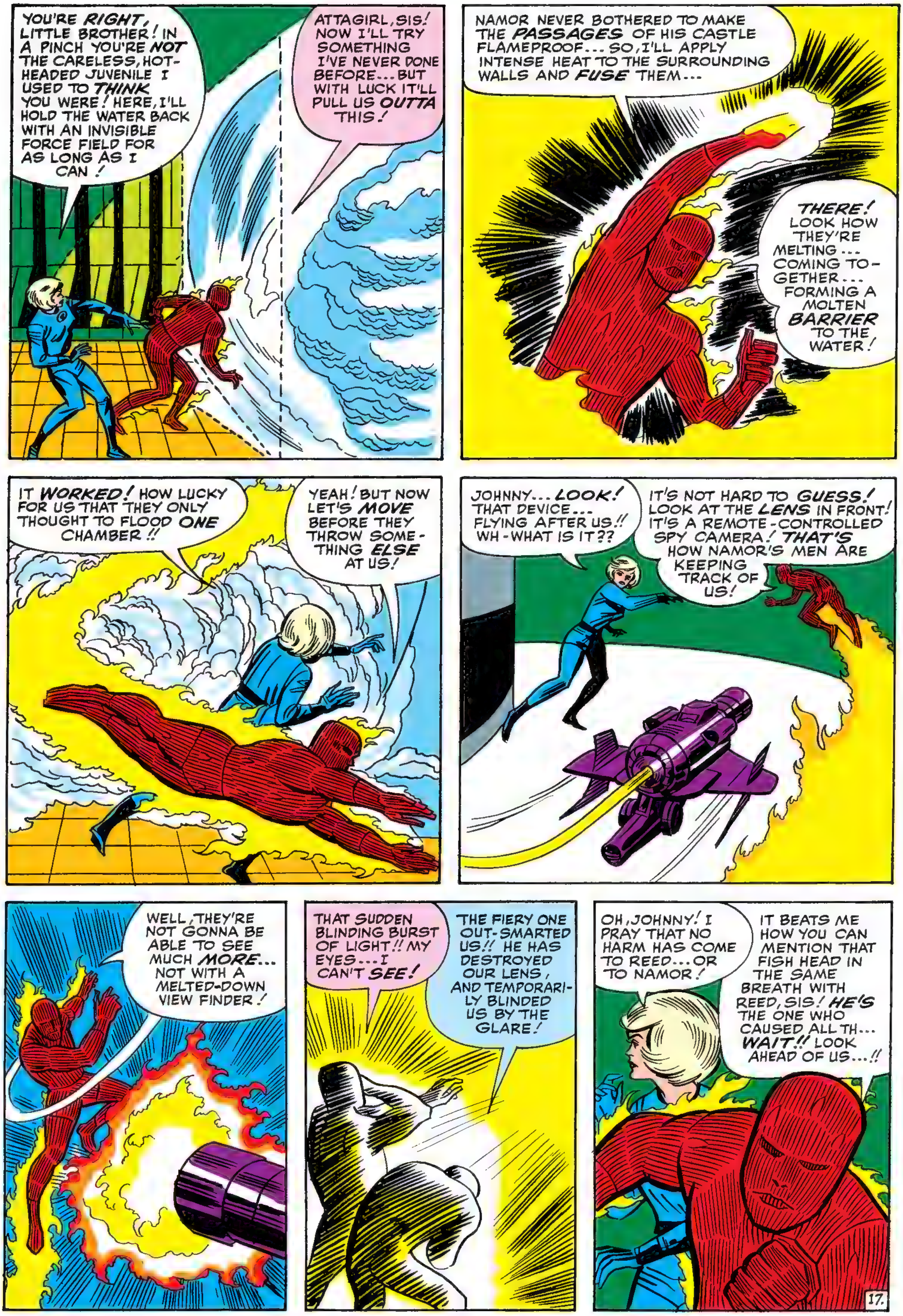

SEIZING REED'S STRETCHED-OUT ARM, THE POWERFUL SUB-MARINER WHIPS HIS FANTASTIC FOE AROUND THE UNDERSEA CHAMBER!
THEN, USING ALL THE SUPER-HUMAN STRENGTH AT HIS COMMAND, HE ATTEMPTS TO BIND REED RICHARDS WITH HIS OWN FLEXIBLE ARM!
IF ONLY I COULD BREAK FREE BEFORE THEY KILL EACH OTHER!
THERE! AND NOW THAT I HAVE YOU HELPLESS...
I'M FAR FROM HELP-LESS, NAMOR! AS YOU'RE ABOUT TO LEARN...
DON'T FORGET, MY ENTIRE BODY IS SUBJECT TO MY MENTAL CONTROL! I CAN JAB YOU AWAY BY MAKING SHARP LANCES OF MY OUTER SKIN WHILE I EASILY FREE MYSELF FROM YOUR USELESS KNOT!!
THOUGH YOUR STRENGTH IS MANY TIMES GREATER THAN MINE, YOU HAVEN'T THE BRAIN POWER TO USE IT CORRECTLY! I'LL WHITTLE IT DOWN TO NOTHING!
NO! NOT HERE! NOT IN MY OWN DOMAIN! THERE MUST BE A WAY TO BEAT YOU!
DON'T COUNT ON IT, NAMOR! WHEN YOU CAPTURED SUE... YOU WENT TOO FAR!!
I WARNED YOU!! THE SAVAGERY OF YOUR ATTACK IS WASTED ON AN ENEMY WHO CAN EASILY DODGE YOUR BLOWS!
YOU CAN'T STAY OUT OF MY REACH FOREVER! SOONER OR LATER I'LL LAND A PUNCH!! THAT'S ALL IT'LL TAKE... JUST ONE FINAL PUNCH!!

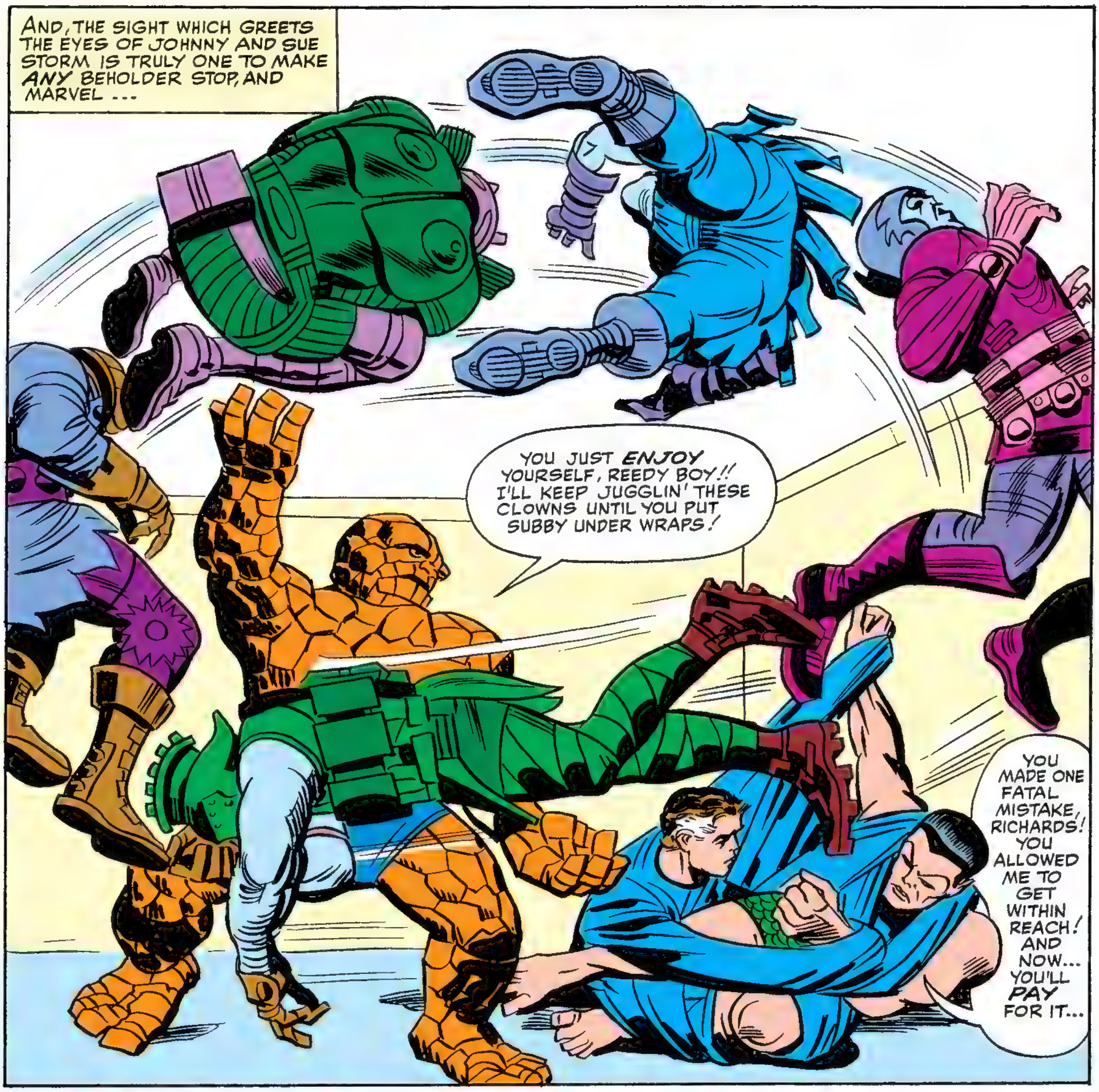

WRONG AGAIN, FISHMAN! I'M NOT MERELY *TRYING* TO STAY OUT OF YOUR REACH!! I WARNED YOU... I'M GOING TO FINISH YOU OFF FOREVER!
I'VE GOT TO MAKE HIM FOLLOW ME... TO LURE HIM TO THE SURFACE!
BUT SUDDENLY, AN ANGRY BABBLE OF VOICES IS HEARD DIRECTLY AHEAD OF REED...
...AND A WELL-ARMED SQUAD OF UNDERSEA WARRIORS STANDS IN THE ARCHWAY!
LOOK, CAPTAIN! OUR SOVEREIGN BATTLES A SURFACE FOE! IT IS LUCKY WE DECIDED TO RETURN!
INDEED! WE REALIZED WE COULD *NOT* DESERT OUR PRINCE AND STILL BE WORTHY OF THE NAME SUB-MARINERS!!!
HALT, SURFACE-MAN! TAKE ANOTHER STEP AND YOU *DIE!* YOU ARE OUR PRISONER!
NEVER! THE ODDS HAVE BEEN CHANGED A LITTLE, BUT THAT'S ALL! I'LL SMASH YOUR ENTIRE *EMPIRE* IF I MUST ...BUT NAMOR WON'T ESCAPE ME!
MEANTIME ...BACK AT F.F. HEADQUARTERS...
LOOK! DOC STRANGE IS BACK! HE'S COMING RIGHT THROUGH THE WALL!
YEAH! LIKE A *TERMITE!* START TALKIN', MYSTERY MAN... WHERE'S SUB-MARINER?
I HAVE *FOUND* HIM!
BUT, GUIDED BY HIS OWN BRILLIANT ELECTRONIC DEVICES, *MR. FANTASTIC* FOUND HIM FIRST! YOU MUST RUSH TO THE SCENE AT ONCE!
WE HEAR YA *TALKIN',* PAL! ONE SWALLOW OF OUR 60-MINUTES UNDERWATER BREATHIN' PILLS AND WE'RE ON OUR WAY!
MAYBE WE SHOULDN'T SWALLOW 'EM YET, BEN! THEY'LL BE USED UP BEFORE WE EVEN *REACH* REED!
BUT DR. STRANGE ABRUPTLY VANISHES, ONLY TO RETURN AGAIN, WITHIN MINUTES, IN HIS PHYSICAL FORM! AND THEN...
NOW THAT I AM IN MY MORTAL BODY, ALL THE SPELLS OF THE MYSTIC ARTS ARE MINE TO USE! I SHALL SEND YOU TO PRINCE NAMOR BY THE FASTEST WAY IMAGINABLE!
YEAH? *HOW?*

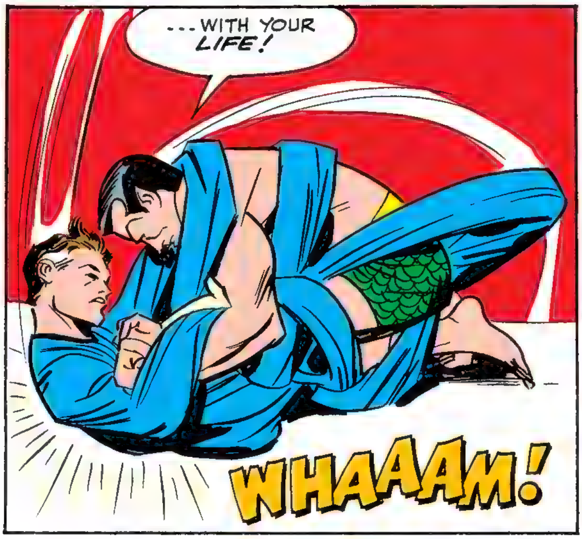

LET THE VISIONARY VAPORS OF THE DREAD DORMAMMU SURROUND YOU...
HEY! WHAT'S GOIN' ON? HOW DO WE KNOW HE AIN'T DR. DOOM IN DISGUISE?!!
RELAX, BIG BUDDY! HE KNOWS WHAT HE'S DOIN'... I HOPE!
I CALL UPON THE HOSTS OF HOGGOTH!! TRANSPORT THOSE TWO BEINGS BY THE POWER OF VISHANTI, TO THE PLACE FROM WHENCE I HAVE RETURNED!! LET IT BE DONE... NOW!!
NOT AN HOUR LATER... NOT A MINUTE LATER... BUT, AT THAT EXACT MICRO-SECOND...
HE DID IT! WE'RE IN NAMOR'S PALACE!
AND I DIDN'T EVEN HAVE TIME TO PACK MY TOOTH-BRUSH!! OKAY, WHERE IS THAT PHONY FISH-MAN??
HEY... THAT'S HIM! HE'S WATCHIN' HIS DEEPSEA STOOGES HAVIN' TARGET PRACTICE WITH OUR BOUNCIN' BUDDY!!
WE'RE JUST IN TIME TO JOIN THE PARTY! STAND BACK, BIG FELLA... I'M GONNA MAKE THINGS HOT FOR THOSE JOKERS!
FLAME ON!
OUR GUNS... THEY'RE MELTING!! LOOK... ABOVE US... A FIERY CREATURE!
DON'T HOG ALL THE ACTION, JUNIOR!! LEAVE A FEW DOZEN FOR LOVABLE OL' ME TO CLOBBER!!
I'LL SEE WHAT I CAN DO, BEN BOY--- BUT IF YOU DON'T SPEED IT UP, YOU'LL JUST GET THE LEFTOVERS, AS USUAL!

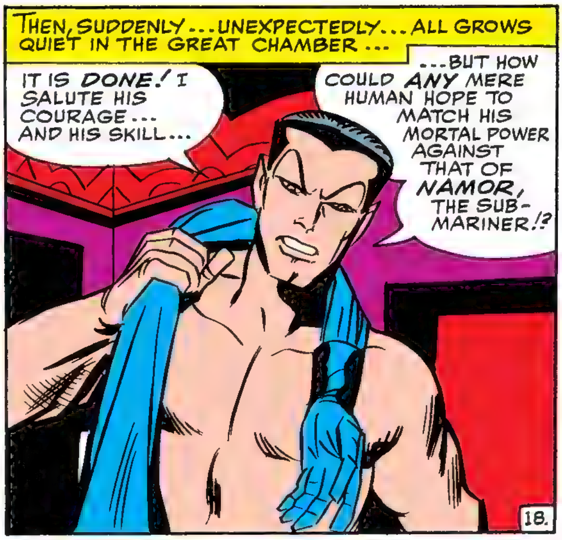

WHERE ARE YOU *RUNNING* TO, BOYS?? DIDN'T YOU EVER SEE A FUN-LOVIN' *HUMAN TORCH* BEFORE??
JOHNNY! BEN! HOW DID YOU *GET* HERE?? I WANTED TO FINISH THIS JOB *ALONE!*
SURE, BOSS, SURE! WE JUST TAGGED ALONG IN CASE YOU WANTED TO HAVE A FEW *CHEER LEADERS* WITH YA!
IT IS *GOOD* THAT YOU'RE HERE! NOW I CAN DESTROY *ALL* OF YOU AT ONCE!
STILL MAKING THREATS, EH, NAMOR?? STAY BACK, BEN! I'M GOING TO RAM THOSE MOCKING WORDS DOWN HIS THROAT!! I'M GOING TO MAKE HIM WISH HE'D NEVER *HEARD* OF THE HUMAN RACE!! HE'S *MY* PIGEON... MINE ALONE!
OKAY, TALL MAN! BUT HOW'S ABOUT GIVIN' *ME* SLOPPY SECONDS?!
SO THE COLD, CALM INTELLECTUAL *MR. FANTASTIC* CAN EXPLODE IN A FIT OF RAGE LIKE ANYONE ELSE!! PERHAPS NOW YOU CAN UNDERSTAND *MY* FEELINGS.. WHEN I HAVE LOST MY KINGDOM, MY PEOPLE, EVERYTHING I HOLD DEAR --- BECAUSE OF YOU ACCURSED *HUMANS!*
YOUR BLIND FURY MADE YOU FORGET HOW *FAST* I CAN MOVE!! AND NOW, BEFORE YOU CAN MARSHAL YOUR NEXT ATTACK, YOU'LL FEEL THE AWESOME POWER OF NAMOR THE FIRST, PRINCE OF ATLANTIS!!
YOU'RE NOT THE *ONLY* ONE WHO CAN MOVE QUICKLY! AND A MAN DOESN'T NEED ROYAL BLOOD IN ORDER TO FIGHT TO THE DEATH FOR WHAT HE BELIEVES IN!!
SO LONG AS YOU LIVE MANKIND WILL BE IN DANGER!! I'LL SEE TO IT THAT NAMOR THE FIRST BECOMES NAMOR THE *LAST!!*

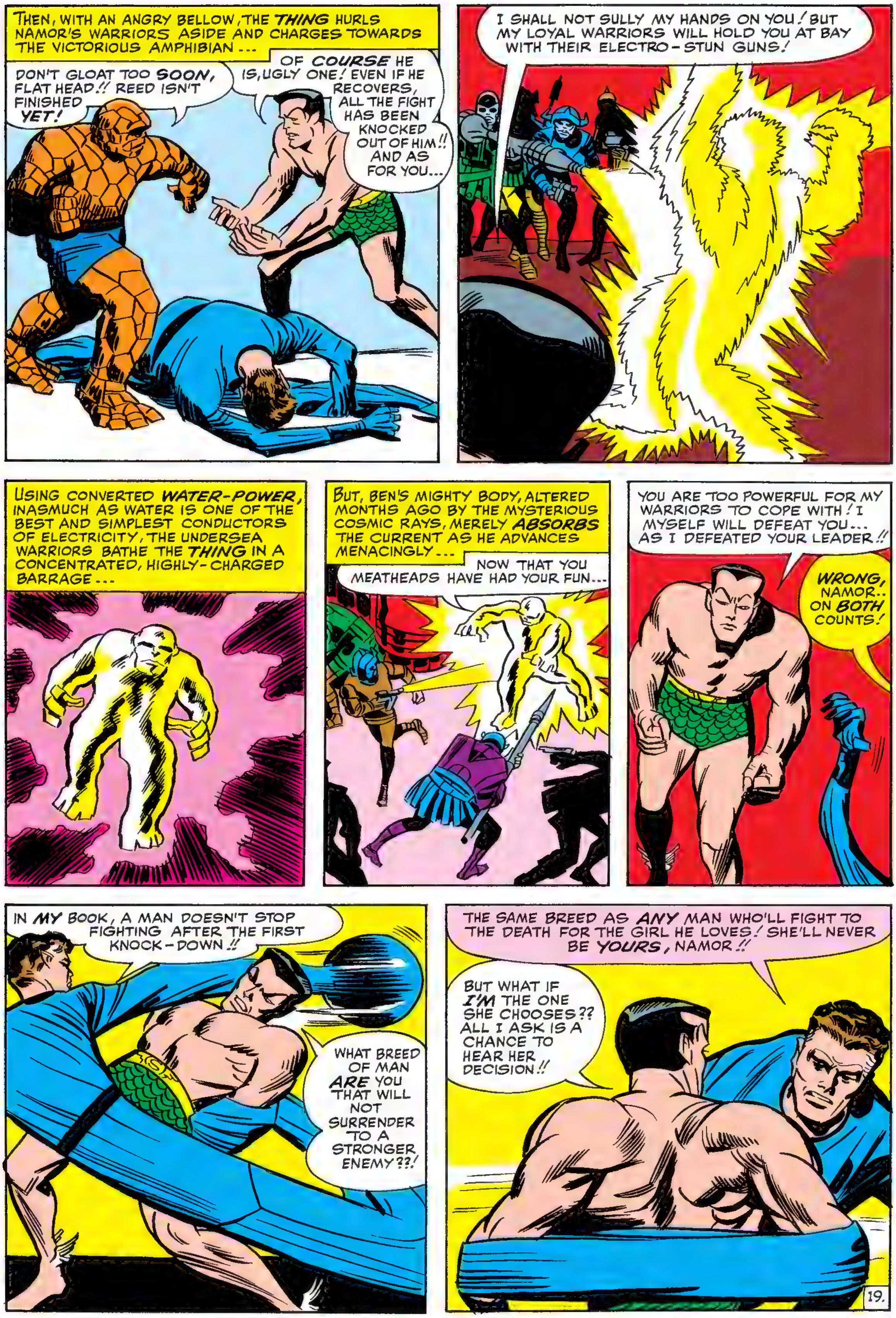

MEANWHILE, ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE UNDERSEA THRONE ROOM...
GET GOIN', JOHNNY BOY! I'LL FIND A COZY LITTLE PLAYPEN FOR THESE FUN-LOVIN' KIDS WHILE YOU SEE WHERE **SUE** IS!!
WILL DO, PARTNER! I'VE GOT A HUNCH SHE MUST BE NEARBY SOMEWHERE! AND IF SHE ***ISN'T***, EVEN ***REED*** WON'T BE ABLE TO KEEP ME FROM TACKLIN' NAMOR!
BUT, THE TORCH'S HUNCH PROVES CORRECT! FOR, AS HE ROUNDS A CORNER...
IF ONLY MY INVISIBLE FORCE FIELD WAS STRONG ENOUGH TO PUSH THIS SHATTER-PROOF GLASS BEYOND ITS BREAKING POINT!
SUE! IT'S ***ME***, JOHNNY! DON'T WORRY, SIS... YOU'LL BE OKAY NOW!
STAY BACK! THE GLASS ISN'T ***MADE*** THAT CAN RESIST MY NEAR-NOVA FLAME BLAST!
YOU ***DID*** IT, JOHNNY! I'M ***FREE!!***
BUT WHAT ABOUT ***REED***... AND ***NAMOR??*** THEY WERE FIGHTING SO ***DESPERATELY!!*** ARE THEY...?!
THEY WERE OKAY WHEN I ***LEFT*** 'EM, SIS! BUT, I NEVER SAW REED SO ***MAD*** BEFORE! HE WAS A ***TIGER!!***
BUT, UNKNOWN TO JOHNNY OR SUE, THEIR EVERY MOVE IS BEING MONITORED BY TWO OF NAMOR'S LOYAL OFFICERS WHO ESCAPED TO THE OBSERVATION CONTROL ROOM BEFORE THE THING COULD ROUND THEM UP!
PULL THE LEVER! LET THE ***SEA WATER*** FLOOD CHAMBER SIX... ***NOW!***
JOHNNY!! THE ***SEA*** IS RUSHING IN... WE'LL BE ***DROWNED!***
NO, WE WON'T! REMEMBER HOW REED ALWAYS TAUGHT US NOT TO PANIC? WE'VE GOTTEN OUT OF ***WORSE*** JAMS!

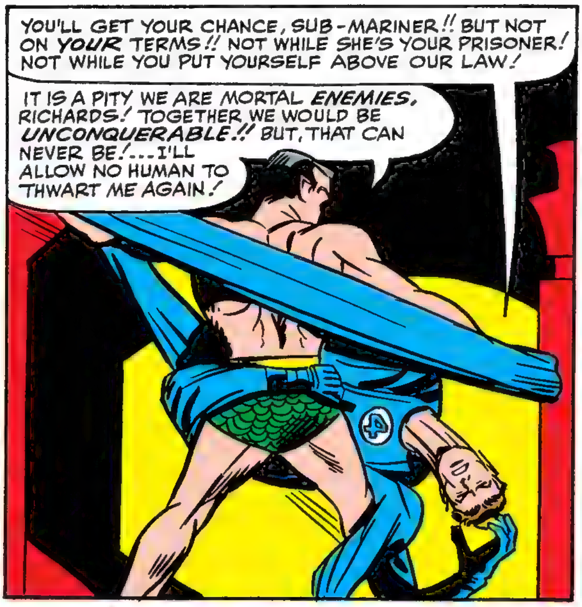

YOU'RE RIGHT, LITTLE BROTHER! IN A PINCH YOU'RE NOT THE CARELESS, HOT-HEADED JUVENILE I USED TO THINK YOU WERE! HERE, I'LL HOLD THE WATER BACK WITH AN INVISIBLE FORCE FIELD FOR AS LONG AS I CAN!
ATTAGIRL, SIS! NOW I'LL TRY SOMETHING I'VE NEVER DONE BEFORE... BUT WITH LUCK IT'LL PULL US OUTTA THIS!
NAMOR NEVER BOTHERED TO MAKE THE PASSAGES OF HIS CASTLE FLAMEPROOF... SO, I'LL APPLY INTENSE HEAT TO THE SURROUNDING WALLS AND FUSE THEM...
THERE! LOOK HOW THEY'RE MELTING... COMING TOGETHER... FORMING A MOLTEN BARRIER TO THE WATER!
IT WORKED! HOW LUCKY FOR US THAT THEY ONLY THOUGHT TO FLOOD ONE CHAMBER!!
YEAH! BUT NOW LET'S MOVE BEFORE THEY THROW SOMETHING ELSE AT US!
JOHNNY... LOOK! THAT DEVICE... FLYING AFTER US!! WH-WHAT IS IT??
IT'S NOT HARD TO GUESS! LOOK AT THE LENS IN FRONT! IT'S A REMOTE-CONTROLLED SPY CAMERA! THAT'S HOW NAMOR'S MEN ARE KEEPING TRACK OF US!
WELL, THEY'RE NOT GONNA BE ABLE TO SEE MUCH MORE... NOT WITH A MELTED-DOWN VIEW FINDER!
THAT SUDDEN BLINDING BURST OF LIGHT!! MY EYES... I CAN'T SEE!
THE FIERY ONE OUT-SMARTED US!! HE HAS DESTROYED OUR LENS, AND TEMPORARILY BLINDED US BY THE GLARE!
OH, JOHNNY! I PRAY THAT NO HARM HAS COME TO REED... OR TO NAMOR!
IT BEATS ME HOW YOU CAN MENTION THAT FISH HEAD IN THE SAME BREATH WITH REED, SIS! HE'S THE ONE WHO CAUSED ALL TH... WAIT!! LOOK AHEAD OF US...!!

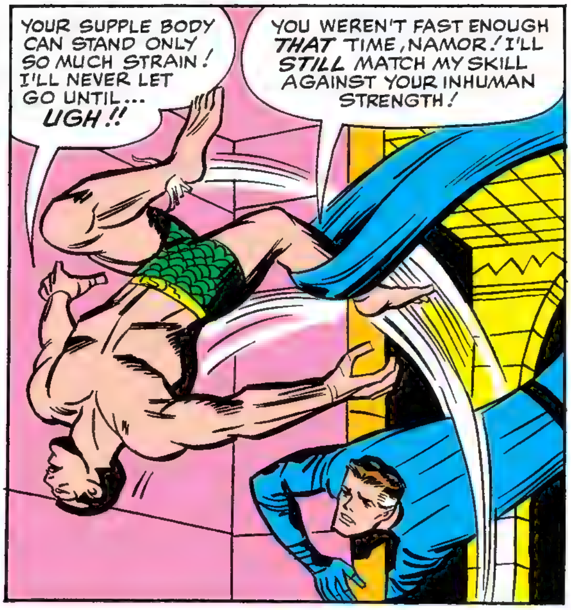

AND, THE SIGHT WHICH GREETS THE EYES OF JOHNNY AND SUE STORM IS TRULY ONE TO MAKE *ANY* BEHOLDER STOP, AND MARVEL ...
YOU JUST *ENJOY* YOURSELF, REEDY BOY!! I'LL KEEP JUGGLIN' THESE CLOWNS UNTIL YOU PUT SUBBY UNDER WRAPS!
YOU MADE ONE FATAL MISTAKE, RICHARDS! YOU ALLOWED ME TO GET WITHIN REACH! AND NOW... YOU'LL *PAY* FOR IT...

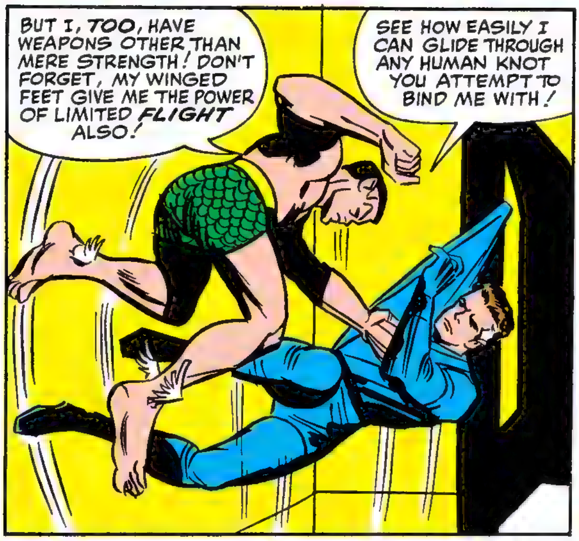

...WITH YOUR *LIFE!*
WHAAAM!

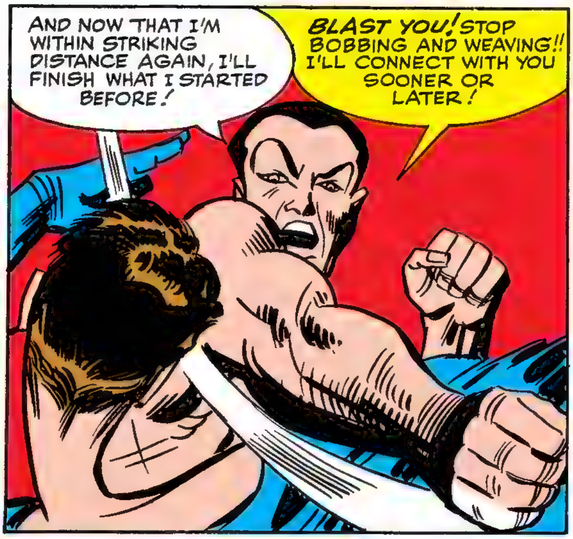

THEN, SUDDENLY...UNEXPECTEDLY...ALL GROWS QUIET IN THE GREAT CHAMBER...
IT IS *DONE!* I SALUTE HIS COURAGE... AND HIS SKILL...
...BUT HOW COULD *ANY* MERE HUMAN HOPE TO MATCH HIS MORTAL POWER AGAINST THAT OF *NAMOR,* THE SUB-MARINER!?

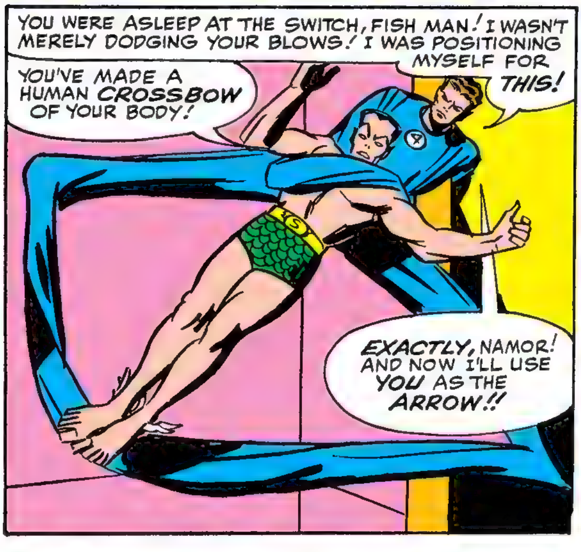

THEN, WITH AN ANGRY BELLOW, THE *THING* HURLS NAMOR'S WARRIORS ASIDE AND CHARGES TOWARDS THE VICTORIOUS AMPHIBIAN . . .
DON'T GLOAT TOO **SOON**, FLAT HEAD!! REED ISN'T FINISHED ***YET!***
OF ***COURSE*** HE IS, UGLY ONE! EVEN IF HE RECOVERS, ALL THE FIGHT HAS BEEN KNOCKED OUT OF HIM!! AND AS FOR YOU . . .
I SHALL NOT SULLY MY HANDS ON YOU! BUT MY LOYAL WARRIORS WILL HOLD YOU AT BAY WITH THEIR ELECTRO-STUN GUNS!
USING CONVERTED ***WATER-POWER***, INASMUCH AS WATER IS ONE OF THE BEST AND SIMPLEST CONDUCTORS OF ELECTRICITY, THE UNDERSEA WARRIORS BATHE THE ***THING*** IN A CONCENTRATED, HIGHLY-CHARGED BARRAGE . . .
BUT, BEN'S MIGHTY BODY, ALTERED MONTHS AGO BY THE MYSTERIOUS COSMIC RAYS, MERELY ***ABSORBS*** THE CURRENT AS HE ADVANCES MENACINGLY . . .
NOW THAT YOU MEATHEADS HAVE HAD YOUR FUN . . .
YOU ARE TOO POWERFUL FOR MY WARRIORS TO COPE WITH! I MYSELF WILL DEFEAT YOU . . . AS I DEFEATED YOUR LEADER!!
WRONG, NAMOR . . ON ***BOTH*** COUNTS!
IN ***MY*** BOOK, A MAN DOESN'T STOP FIGHTING AFTER THE FIRST KNOCK-DOWN!!
WHAT BREED OF MAN ***ARE*** YOU THAT WILL NOT SURRENDER TO A STRONGER ENEMY??!
THE SAME BREED AS ***ANY*** MAN WHO'LL FIGHT TO THE DEATH FOR THE GIRL HE LOVES! SHE'LL NEVER BE ***YOURS***, NAMOR!!
BUT WHAT IF ***I'M*** THE ONE SHE CHOOSES?? ALL I ASK IS A CHANCE TO HEAR HER DECISION!!

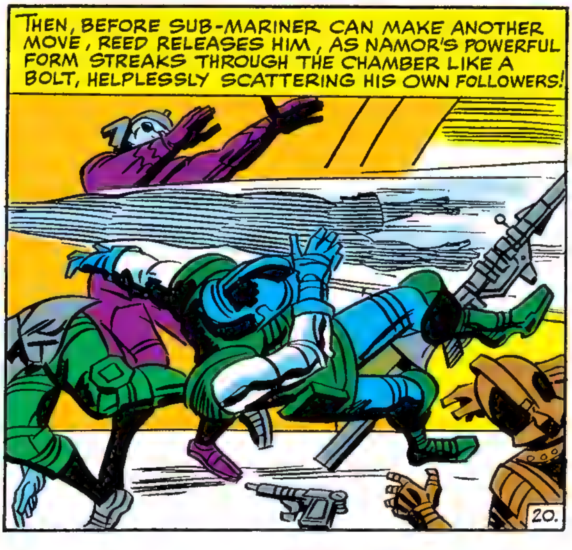

YOU'LL GET YOUR CHANCE, SUB-MARINER!! BUT NOT ON *YOUR* TERMS!! NOT WHILE SHE'S YOUR PRISONER! NOT WHILE YOU PUT YOURSELF ABOVE OUR LAW!
IT IS A PITY WE ARE MORTAL *ENEMIES*, RICHARDS! TOGETHER WE WOULD BE *UNCONQUERABLE*!! BUT, THAT CAN NEVER BE!... I'LL ALLOW NO HUMAN TO THWART ME AGAIN!

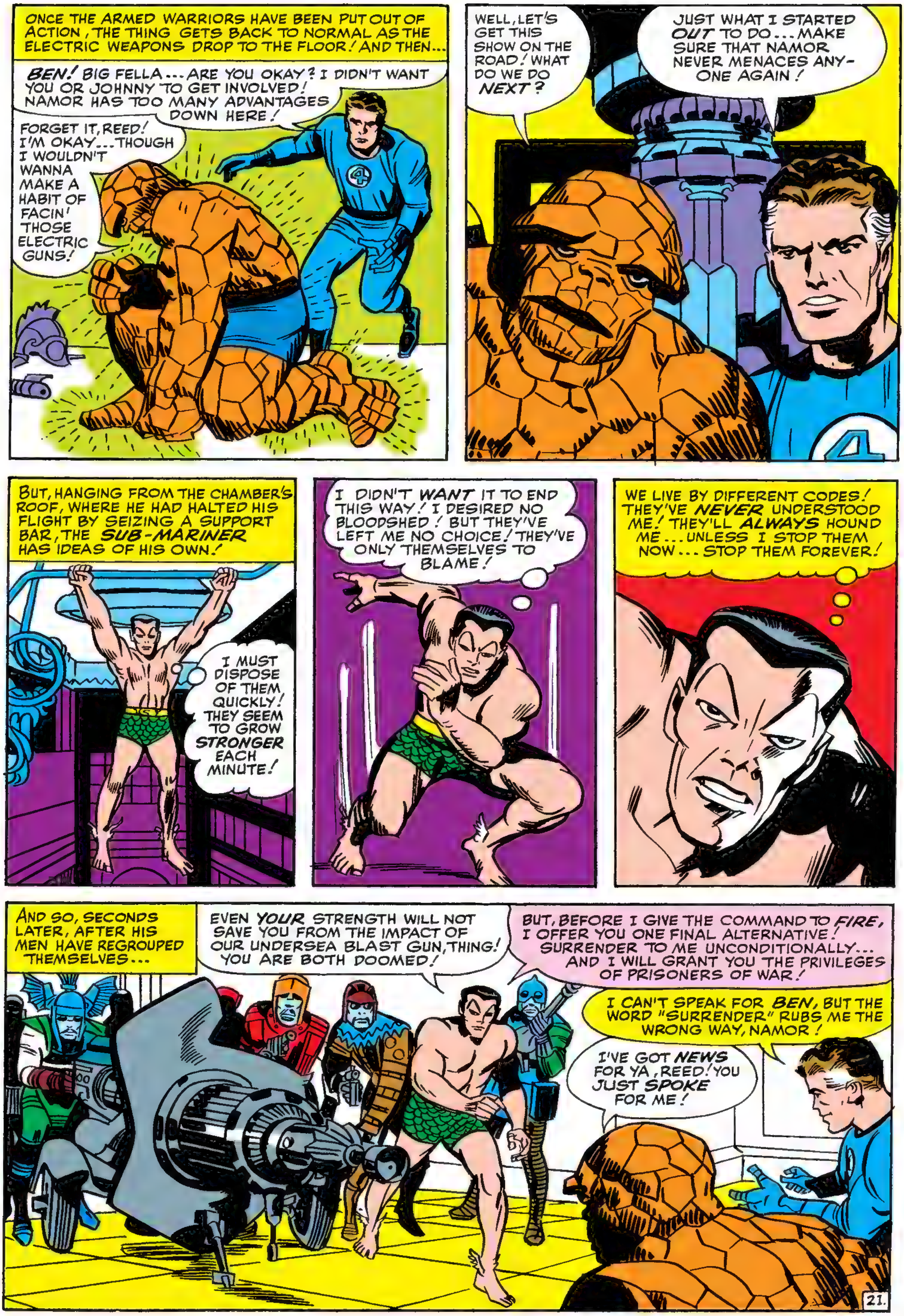

YOUR SUPPLE BODY CAN STAND ONLY SO MUCH STRAIN! I'LL NEVER LET GO UNTIL... *UGH!!*
YOU WEREN'T FAST ENOUGH *THAT* TIME, NAMOR! I'LL *STILL* MATCH MY SKILL AGAINST YOUR INHUMAN STRENGTH!

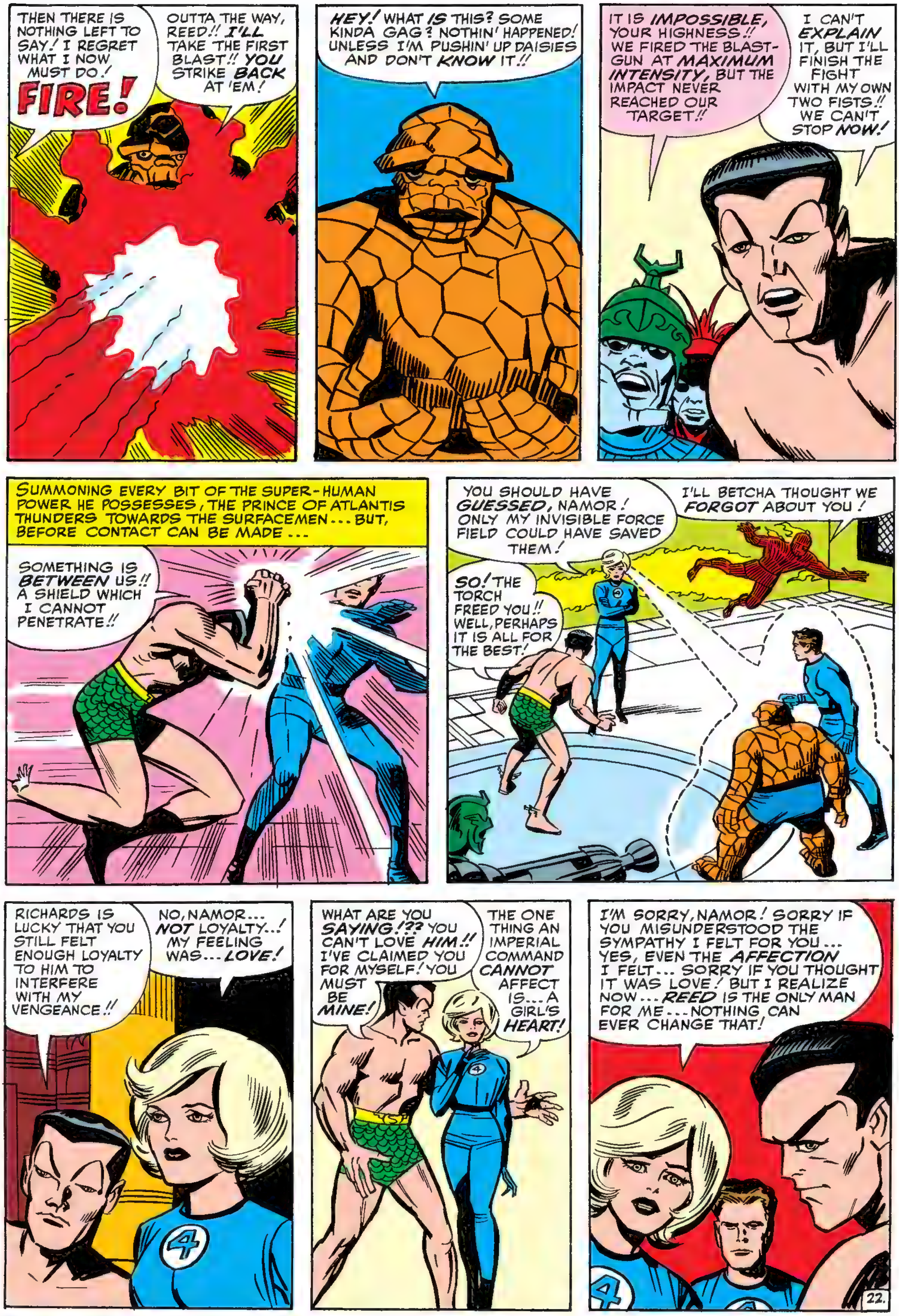

BUT I, *TOO*, HAVE WEAPONS OTHER THAN MERE STRENGTH! DON'T FORGET, MY WINGED FEET GIVE ME THE POWER OF LIMITED *FLIGHT* ALSO!
SEE HOW EASILY I CAN GLIDE THROUGH ANY HUMAN KNOT YOU ATTEMPT TO BIND ME WITH!

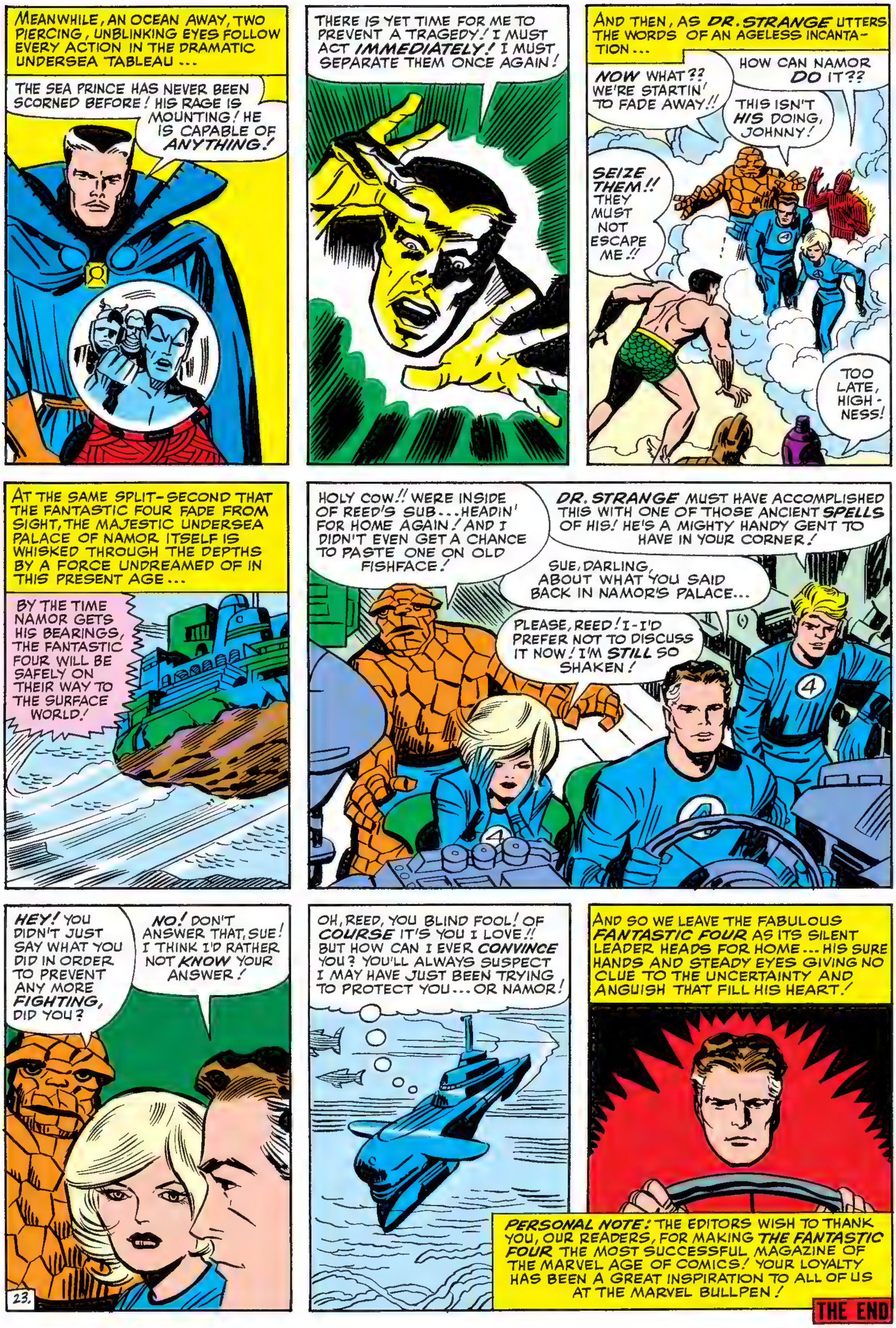

AND NOW THAT I'M WITHIN STRIKING DISTANCE AGAIN, I'LL FINISH WHAT I STARTED BEFORE!
BLAST YOU! STOP BOBBING AND WEAVING!! I'LL CONNECT WITH YOU SOONER OR LATER!

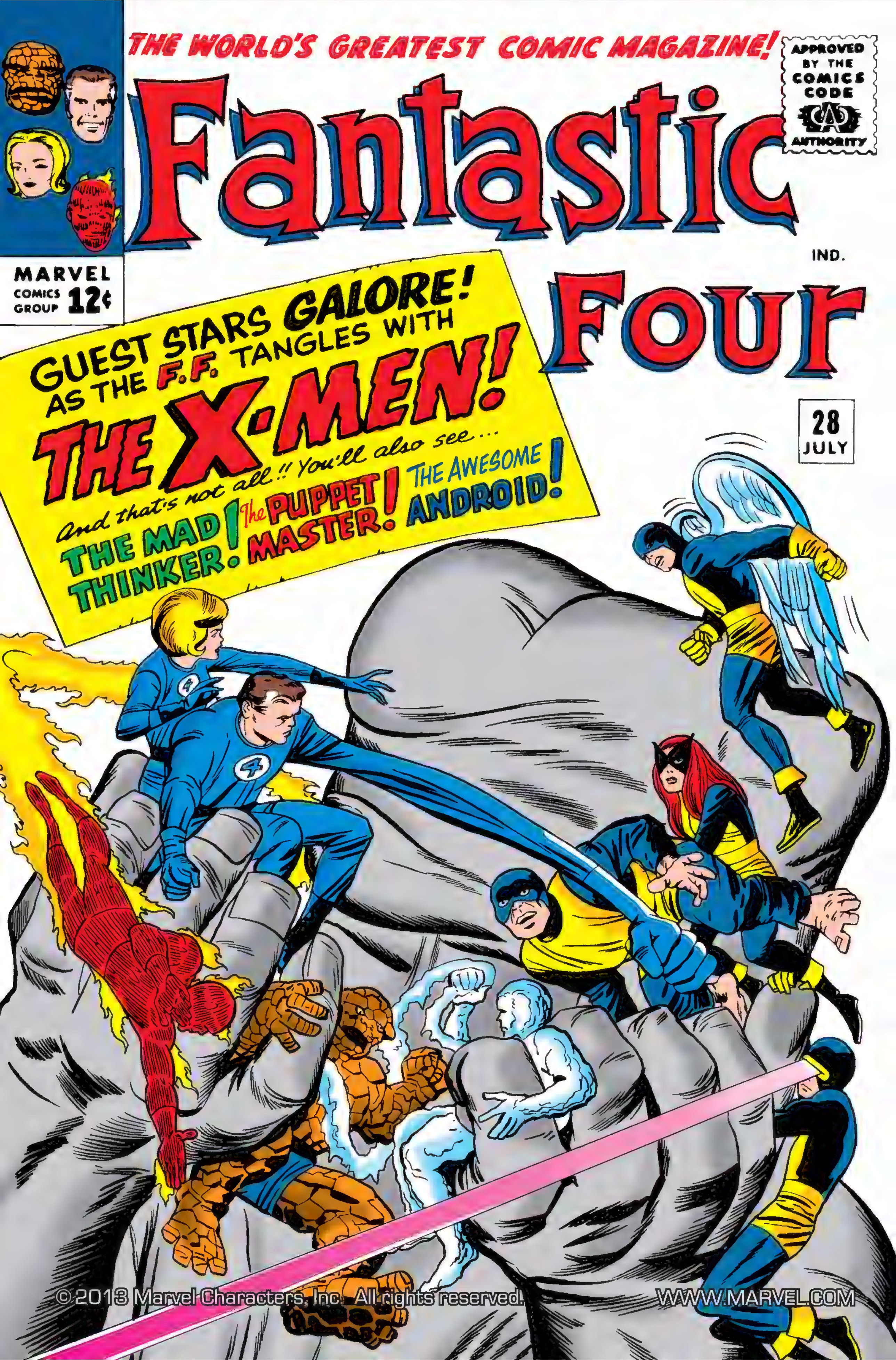

YOU WERE ASLEEP AT THE SWITCH, FISH MAN! I WASN'T MERELY DODGING YOUR BLOWS! I WAS POSITIONING MYSELF FOR *THIS!*
YOU'VE MADE A HUMAN *CROSSBOW* OF YOUR BODY!
EXACTLY, NAMOR! AND NOW I'LL USE *YOU* AS THE *ARROW!!*


THEN, BEFORE SUB-MARINER CAN MAKE ANOTHER MOVE, REED RELEASES HIM, AS NAMOR'S POWERFUL FORM STREAKS THROUGH THE CHAMBER LIKE A BOLT, HELPLESSLY SCATTERING HIS OWN FOLLOWERS!


ONCE THE ARMED WARRIORS HAVE BEEN PUT OUT OF ACTION, THE THING GETS BACK TO NORMAL AS THE ELECTRIC WEAPONS DROP TO THE FLOOR! AND THEN...
BEN! BIG FELLA... ARE YOU OKAY? I DIDN'T WANT YOU OR JOHNNY TO GET INVOLVED! NAMOR HAS TOO MANY ADVANTAGES DOWN HERE!
FORGET IT, REED! I'M OKAY... THOUGH I WOULDN'T WANNA MAKE A HABIT OF FACIN' THOSE ELECTRIC GUNS!
WELL, LET'S GET THIS SHOW ON THE ROAD! WHAT DO WE DO NEXT?
JUST WHAT I STARTED OUT TO DO... MAKE SURE THAT NAMOR NEVER MENACES ANYONE AGAIN!
BUT, HANGING FROM THE CHAMBER'S ROOF, WHERE HE HAD HALTED HIS FLIGHT BY SEIZING A SUPPORT BAR, THE SUB-MARINER HAS IDEAS OF HIS OWN!
I MUST DISPOSE OF THEM QUICKLY! THEY SEEM TO GROW STRONGER EACH MINUTE!
I DIDN'T WANT IT TO END THIS WAY! I DESIRED NO BLOODSHED! BUT THEY'VE LEFT ME NO CHOICE! THEY'VE ONLY THEMSELVES TO BLAME!
WE LIVE BY DIFFERENT CODES! THEY'VE NEVER UNDERSTOOD ME! THEY'LL ALWAYS HOUND ME... UNLESS I STOP THEM NOW... STOP THEM FOREVER!
AND SO, SECONDS LATER, AFTER HIS MEN HAVE REGROUPED THEMSELVES...
EVEN YOUR STRENGTH WILL NOT SAVE YOU FROM THE IMPACT OF OUR UNDERSEA BLAST GUN, THING! YOU ARE BOTH DOOMED!
BUT, BEFORE I GIVE THE COMMAND TO FIRE, I OFFER YOU ONE FINAL ALTERNATIVE! SURRENDER TO ME UNCONDITIONALLY... AND I WILL GRANT YOU THE PRIVILEGES OF PRISONERS OF WAR!
I CAN'T SPEAK FOR BEN, BUT THE WORD "SURRENDER" RUBS ME THE WRONG WAY, NAMOR!
I'VE GOT NEWS FOR YA, REED! YOU JUST SPOKE FOR ME!


THEN THERE IS NOTHING LEFT TO SAY! I REGRET WHAT I NOW MUST DO! FIRE!
OUTTA THE WAY, REED!! I'LL TAKE THE FIRST BLAST!! YOU STRIKE BACK AT 'EM!
HEY! WHAT IS THIS? SOME KINDA GAG? NOTHIN' HAPPENED! UNLESS I'M PUSHIN' UP DAISIES AND DON'T KNOW IT!!
IT IS IMPOSSIBLE, YOUR HIGHNESS!! WE FIRED THE BLAST-GUN AT MAXIMUM INTENSITY, BUT THE IMPACT NEVER REACHED OUR TARGET!!
I CAN'T EXPLAIN IT, BUT I'LL FINISH THE FIGHT WITH MY OWN TWO FISTS!! WE CAN'T STOP NOW!
SUMMONING EVERY BIT OF THE SUPER-HUMAN POWER HE POSSESSES, THE PRINCE OF ATLANTIS THUNDERS TOWARDS THE SURFACEMEN... BUT, BEFORE CONTACT CAN BE MADE...
SOMETHING IS BETWEEN US!! A SHIELD WHICH I CANNOT PENETRATE!!
YOU SHOULD HAVE GUESSED, NAMOR! ONLY MY INVISIBLE FORCE FIELD COULD HAVE SAVED THEM!
I'LL BETCHA THOUGHT WE FORGOT ABOUT YOU!
SO! THE TORCH FREED YOU!! WELL, PERHAPS IT IS ALL FOR THE BEST!
RICHARDS IS LUCKY THAT YOU STILL FELT ENOUGH LOYALTY TO HIM TO INTERFERE WITH MY VENGEANCE!!
NO, NAMOR... NOT LOYALTY...! MY FEELING WAS... LOVE!
WHAT ARE YOU SAYING!?? YOU CAN'T LOVE HIM!! I'VE CLAIMED YOU FOR MYSELF! YOU MUST BE MINE!
THE ONE THING AN IMPERIAL COMMAND CANNOT AFFECT IS... A GIRL'S HEART!
I'M SORRY, NAMOR! SORRY IF YOU MISUNDERSTOOD THE SYMPATHY I FELT FOR YOU... YES, EVEN THE AFFECTION I FELT... SORRY IF YOU THOUGHT IT WAS LOVE! BUT I REALIZE NOW... REED IS THE ONLY MAN FOR ME... NOTHING CAN EVER CHANGE THAT!


MEANWHILE, AN OCEAN AWAY, TWO PIERCING, UNBLINKING EYES FOLLOW EVERY ACTION IN THE DRAMATIC UNDERSEA TABLEAU ...
THE SEA PRINCE HAS NEVER BEEN SCORNED BEFORE! HIS RAGE IS MOUNTING! HE IS CAPABLE OF ANYTHING!
THERE IS YET TIME FOR ME TO PREVENT A TRAGEDY! I MUST ACT IMMEDIATELY! I MUST SEPARATE THEM ONCE AGAIN!
AND THEN, AS DR. STRANGE UTTERS THE WORDS OF AN AGELESS INCANTATION ...
NOW WHAT?? WE'RE STARTIN' TO FADE AWAY!!
HOW CAN NAMOR DO IT??
THIS ISN'T HIS DOING, JOHNNY!
SEIZE THEM!! THEY MUST NOT ESCAPE ME!!
TOO LATE, HIGHNESS!
AT THE SAME SPLIT-SECOND THAT THE FANTASTIC FOUR FADE FROM SIGHT, THE MAJESTIC UNDERSEA PALACE OF NAMOR ITSELF IS WHISKED THROUGH THE DEPTHS BY A FORCE UNDREAMED OF IN THIS PRESENT AGE ...
BY THE TIME NAMOR GETS HIS BEARINGS, THE FANTASTIC FOUR WILL BE SAFELY ON THEIR WAY TO THE SURFACE WORLD!
HOLY COW!! WE'RE INSIDE OF REED'S SUB ... HEADIN' FOR HOME AGAIN! AND I DIDN'T EVEN GET A CHANCE TO PASTE ONE ON OLD FISHFACE!
DR. STRANGE MUST HAVE ACCOMPLISHED THIS WITH ONE OF THOSE ANCIENT SPELLS OF HIS! HE'S A MIGHTY HANDY GENT TO HAVE IN YOUR CORNER!
SUE, DARLING, ABOUT WHAT YOU SAID BACK IN NAMOR'S PALACE...
PLEASE, REED! I-I'D PREFER NOT TO DISCUSS IT NOW! I'M STILL SO SHAKEN!
HEY! YOU DIDN'T JUST SAY WHAT YOU DID IN ORDER TO PREVENT ANY MORE FIGHTING, DID YOU?
NO! DON'T ANSWER THAT, SUE! I THINK I'D RATHER NOT KNOW YOUR ANSWER!
OH, REED, YOU BLIND FOOL! OF COURSE IT'S YOU I LOVE!! BUT HOW CAN I EVER CONVINCE YOU? YOU'LL ALWAYS SUSPECT I MAY HAVE JUST BEEN TRYING TO PROTECT YOU... OR NAMOR!
AND SO WE LEAVE THE FABULOUS FANTASTIC FOUR AS ITS SILENT LEADER HEADS FOR HOME ... HIS SURE HANDS AND STEADY EYES GIVING NO CLUE TO THE UNCERTAINTY AND ANGUISH THAT FILL HIS HEART!
PERSONAL NOTE: THE EDITORS WISH TO THANK YOU, OUR READERS, FOR MAKING THE FANTASTIC FOUR THE MOST SUCCESSFUL MAGAZINE OF THE MARVEL AGE OF COMICS! YOUR LOYALTY HAS BEEN A GREAT INSPIRATION TO ALL OF US AT THE MARVEL BULLPEN!
THE END


THE WORLD'S GREATEST COMIC MAGAZINE!
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE CA AUTHORITY
Fantastic Four
IND.
MARVEL COMICS GROUP 12¢
28 JULY
GUEST STARS GALORE! AS THE F.F. TANGLES WITH THE X-MEN!
And that's not all!! You'll also see...
THE MAD THINKER!
The PUPPET MASTER!
THE AWESOME ANDROID!

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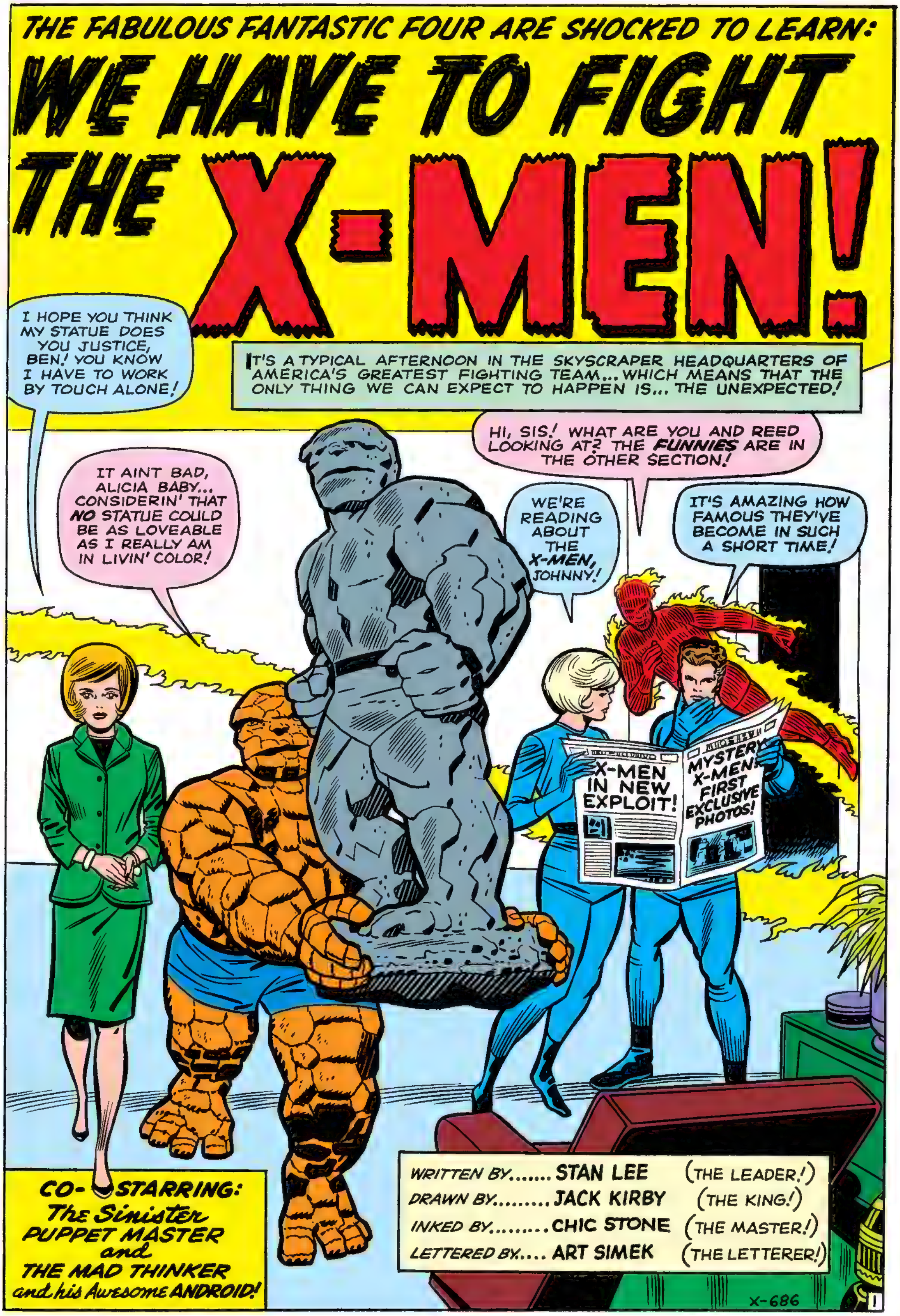
THE FABULOUS FANTASTIC FOUR ARE SHOCKED TO LEARN:
WE HAVE TO FIGHT THE X-MEN!
I HOPE YOU THINK MY STATUE DOES YOU JUSTICE, BEN! YOU KNOW I HAVE TO WORK BY TOUCH ALONE!
IT'S A TYPICAL AFTERNOON IN THE SKYSCRAPER HEADQUARTERS OF AMERICA'S GREATEST FIGHTING TEAM... WHICH MEANS THAT THE ONLY THING WE CAN EXPECT TO HAPPEN IS... THE UNEXPECTED!
IT AINT BAD, ALICIA BABY... CONSIDERIN' THAT NO STATUE COULD BE AS LOVEABLE AS I REALLY AM IN LIVIN' COLOR!
HI, SIS! WHAT ARE YOU AND REED LOOKING AT? THE FUNNIES ARE IN THE OTHER SECTION!
WE'RE READING ABOUT THE X-MEN, JOHNNY!
IT'S AMAZING HOW FAMOUS THEY'VE BECOME IN SUCH A SHORT TIME!
X-MEN IN NEW EXPLOIT!
MYSTERY X-MEN! FIRST EXCLUSIVE PHOTOS!
CO-STARRING: The Sinister PUPPET MASTER and THE MAD THINKER and his Awesome ANDROID!
WRITTEN BY....... STAN LEE (THE LEADER!)
DRAWN BY........ JACK KIRBY (THE KING!)
INKED BY........ CHIC STONE (THE MASTER!)
LETTERED BY.... ART SIMEK (THE LETTERER!)
X-686
1

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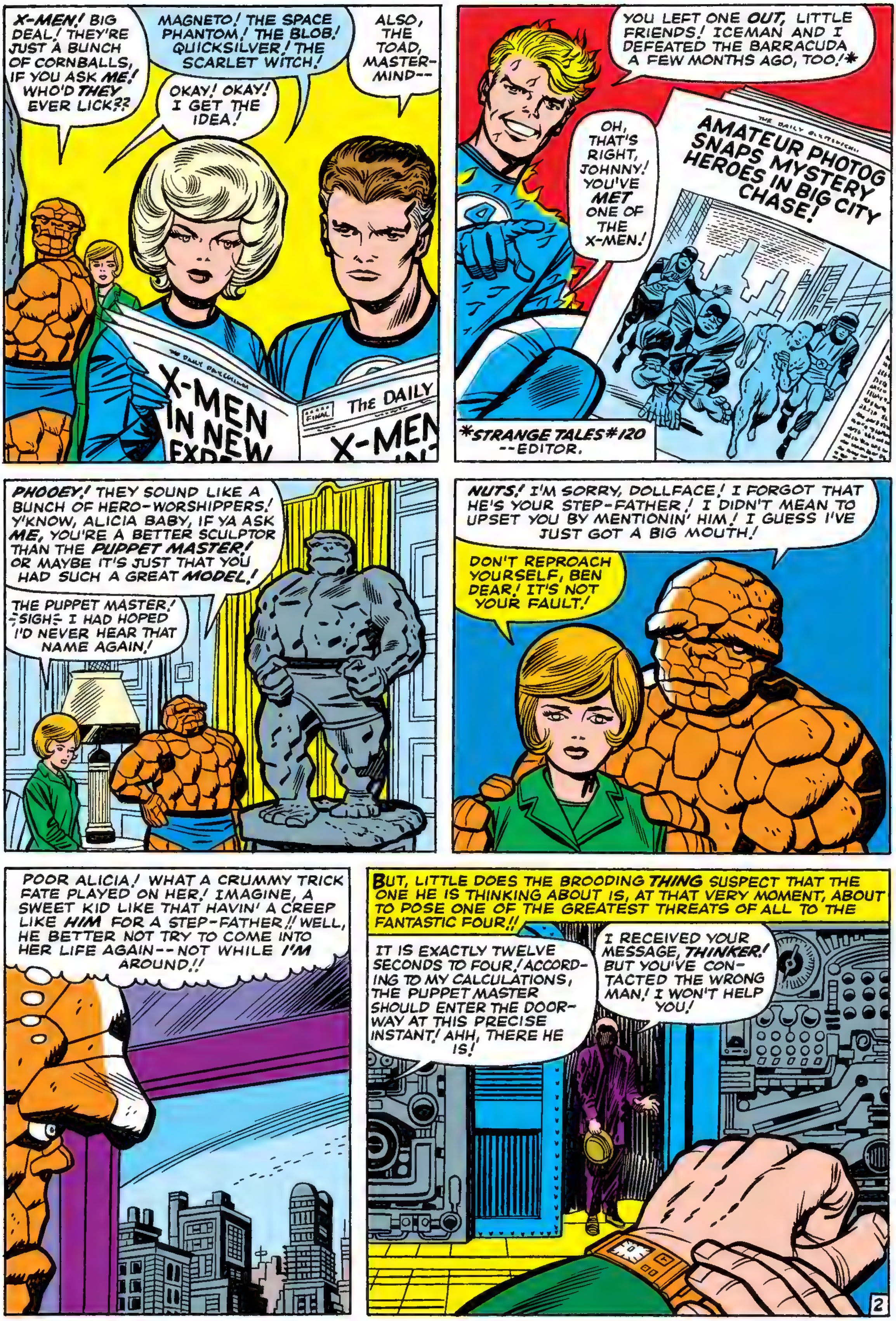
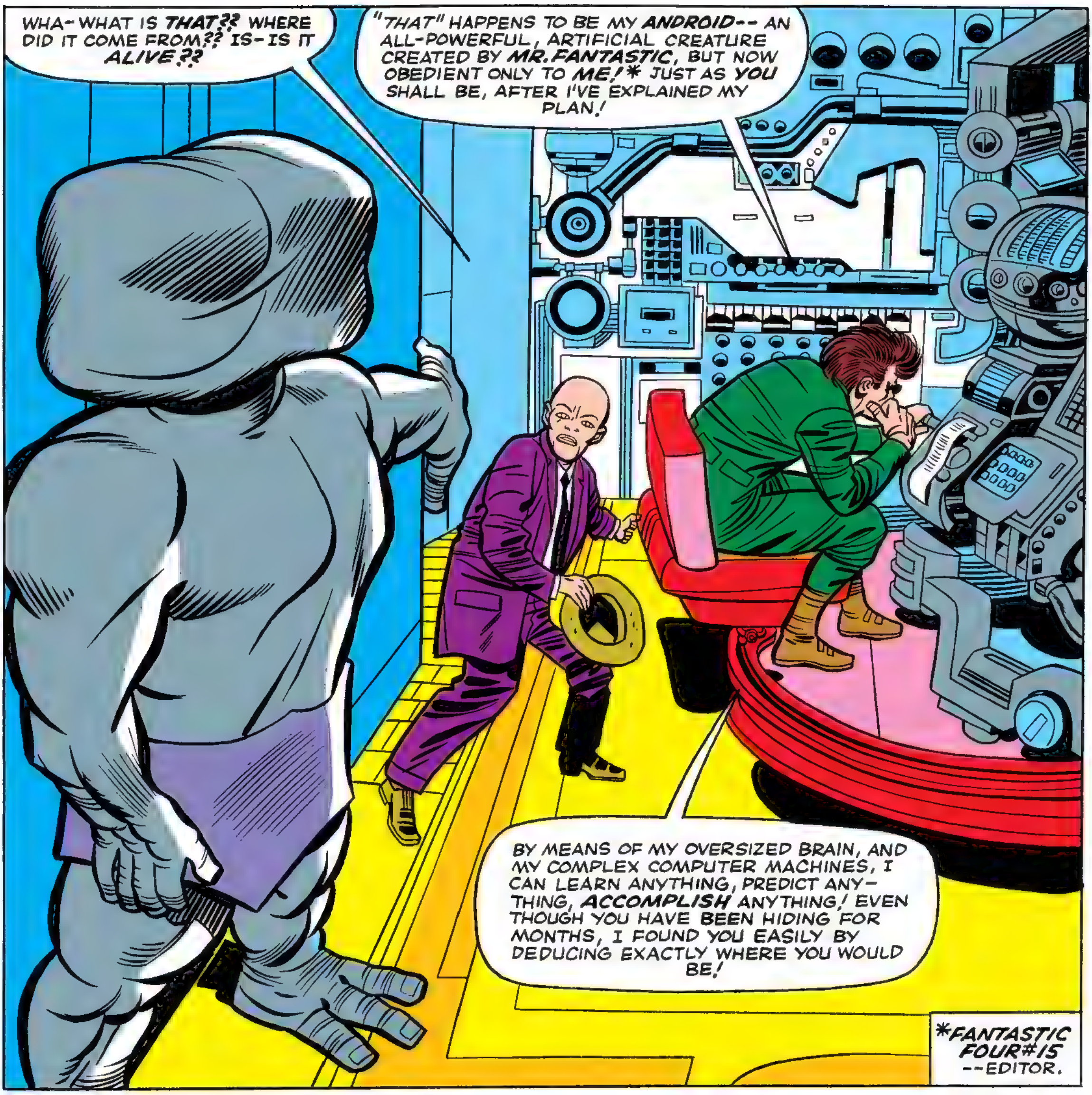
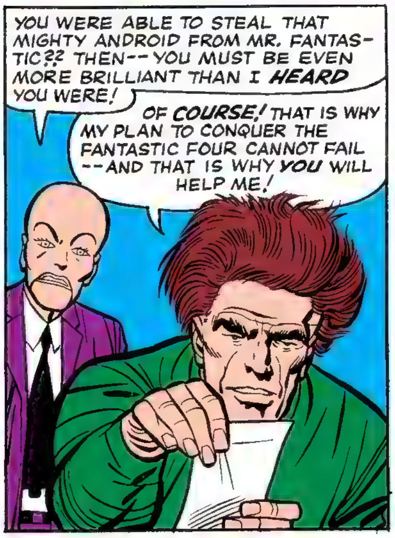
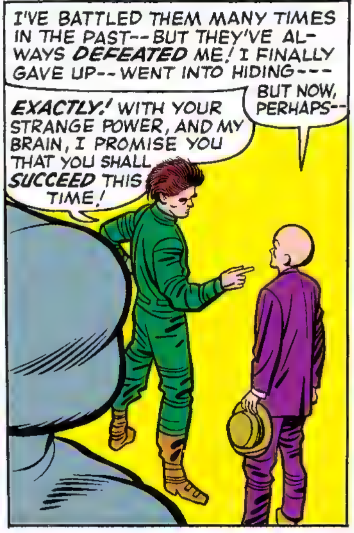
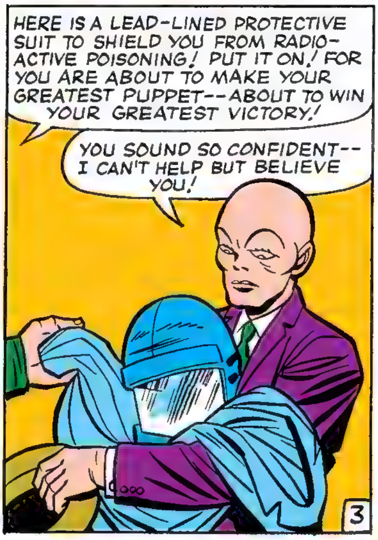
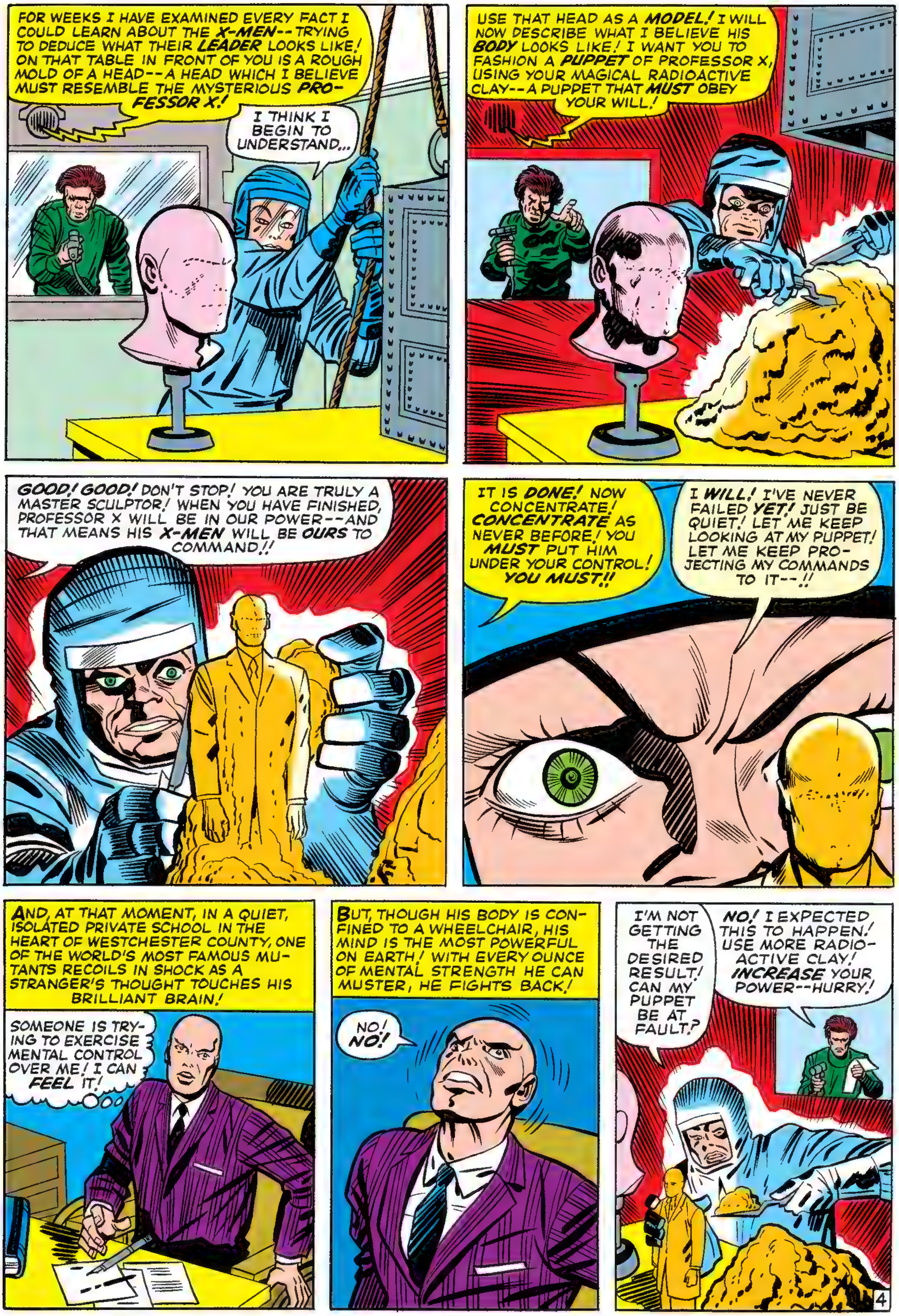

X-MEN! BIG DEAL! THEY'RE JUST A BUNCH OF CORNBALLS, IF YOU ASK ME! WHO'D THEY EVER LICK??
MAGNETO! THE SPACE PHANTOM! THE BLOB! QUICKSILVER! THE SCARLET WITCH!
OKAY! OKAY! I GET THE IDEA!
ALSO, THE TOAD, MASTERMIND--
X-MEN IN NEW EXP
The DAILY
FINAL
X-MEN
YOU LEFT ONE OUT, LITTLE FRIENDS! ICEMAN AND I DEFEATED THE BARRACUDA A FEW MONTHS AGO, TOO!*
OH, THAT'S RIGHT, JOHNNY! YOU'VE MET ONE OF THE X-MEN!
AMATEUR PHOTOG SNAPS MYSTERY HEROES IN BIG CITY CHASE!
*STRANGE TALES #120 --EDITOR.
PHOOEY! THEY SOUND LIKE A BUNCH OF HERO-WORSHIPPERS! Y'KNOW, ALICIA BABY, IF YA ASK ME, YOU'RE A BETTER SCULPTOR THAN THE PUPPET MASTER! OR MAYBE IT'S JUST THAT YOU HAD SUCH A GREAT MODEL!
THE PUPPET MASTER! -SIGH- I HAD HOPED I'D NEVER HEAR THAT NAME AGAIN!
NUTS! I'M SORRY, DOLLFACE! I FORGOT THAT HE'S YOUR STEP-FATHER! I DIDN'T MEAN TO UPSET YOU BY MENTIONIN' HIM! I GUESS I'VE JUST GOT A BIG MOUTH!
DON'T REPROACH YOURSELF, BEN DEAR! IT'S NOT YOUR FAULT!
POOR ALICIA! WHAT A CRUMMY TRICK FATE PLAYED ON HER! IMAGINE, A SWEET KID LIKE THAT HAVIN' A CREEP LIKE HIM FOR A STEP-FATHER!! WELL, HE BETTER NOT TRY TO COME INTO HER LIFE AGAIN--NOT WHILE I'M AROUND!!
BUT, LITTLE DOES THE BROODING THING SUSPECT THAT THE ONE HE IS THINKING ABOUT IS, AT THAT VERY MOMENT, ABOUT TO POSE ONE OF THE GREATEST THREATS OF ALL TO THE FANTASTIC FOUR!!
IT IS EXACTLY TWELVE SECONDS TO FOUR! ACCORDING TO MY CALCULATIONS, THE PUPPET MASTER SHOULD ENTER THE DOORWAY AT THIS PRECISE INSTANT! AHH, THERE HE IS!
I RECEIVED YOUR MESSAGE, THINKER! BUT YOU'VE CONTACTED THE WRONG MAN! I WON'T HELP YOU!

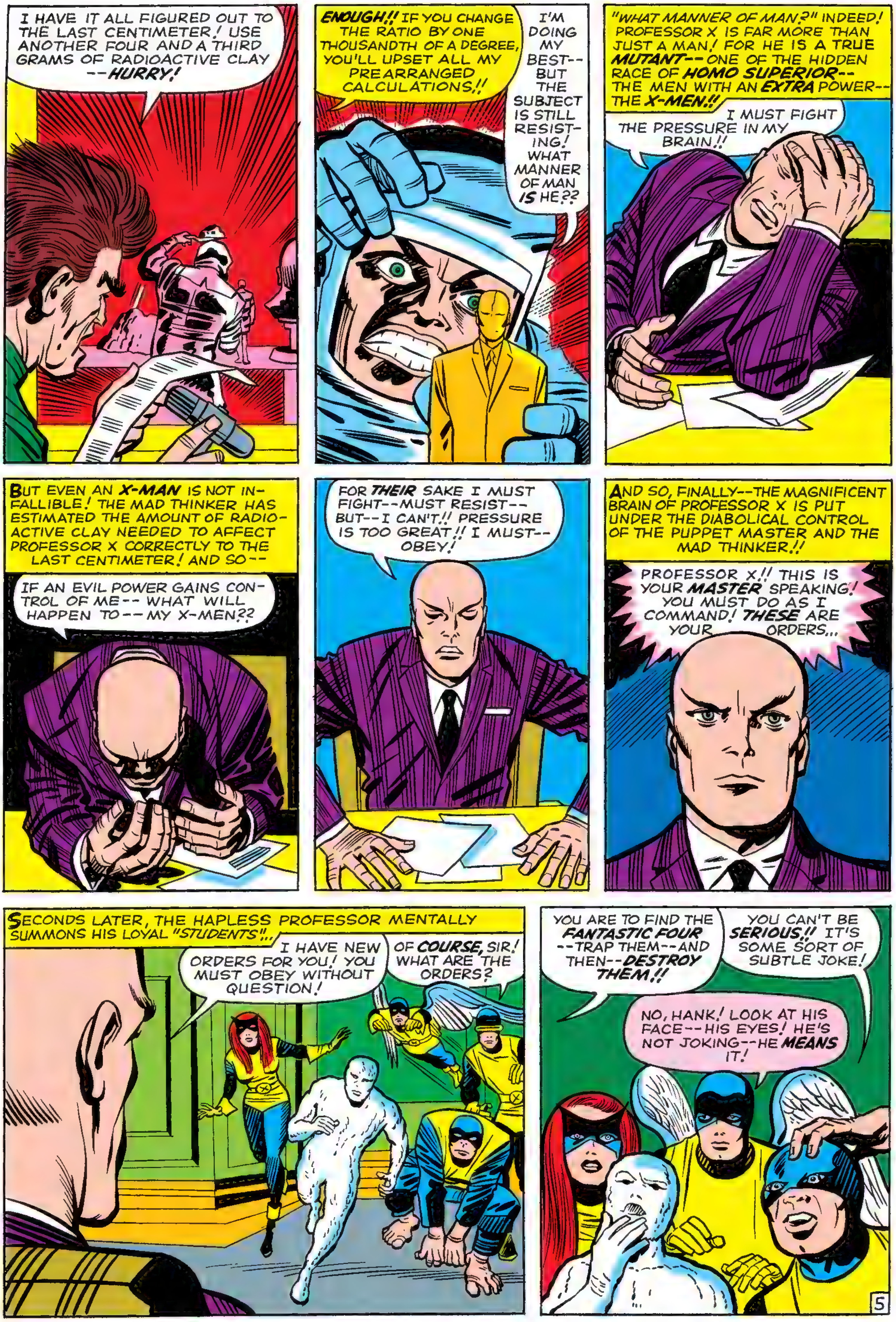

WHA-WHAT IS *THAT??* WHERE DID IT COME FROM?? IS-IS IT *ALIVE??*
"THAT" HAPPENS TO BE MY *ANDROID*-- AN ALL-POWERFUL, ARTIFICIAL CREATURE CREATED BY *MR. FANTASTIC*, BUT NOW OBEDIENT ONLY TO *ME!** JUST AS *YOU* SHALL BE, AFTER I'VE EXPLAINED MY PLAN!
BY MEANS OF MY OVERSIZED BRAIN, AND MY COMPLEX COMPUTER MACHINES, I CAN LEARN ANYTHING, PREDICT ANYTHING, *ACCOMPLISH* ANYTHING! EVEN THOUGH YOU HAVE BEEN HIDING FOR MONTHS, I FOUND YOU EASILY BY DEDUCING EXACTLY WHERE YOU WOULD BE!
**FANTASTIC FOUR #15* --EDITOR.

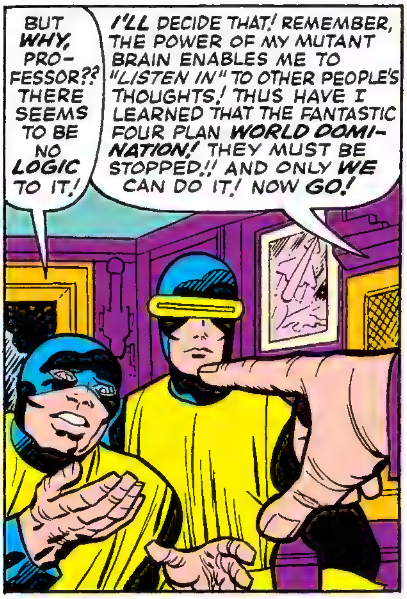

YOU WERE ABLE TO STEAL THAT MIGHTY ANDROID FROM MR. FANTASTIC?? THEN-- YOU MUST BE EVEN MORE BRILLIANT THAN I *HEARD* YOU WERE!
OF *COURSE!* THAT IS WHY MY PLAN TO CONQUER THE FANTASTIC FOUR CANNOT FAIL --AND THAT IS WHY *YOU* WILL HELP ME!

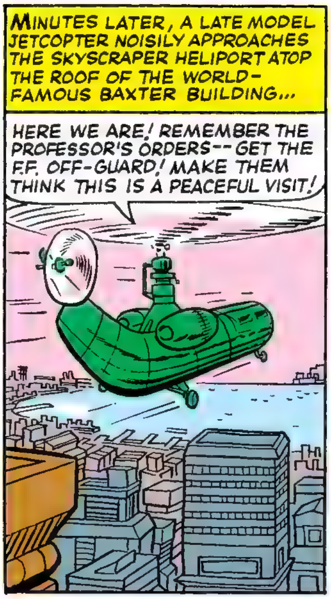

I'VE BATTLED THEM MANY TIMES IN THE PAST-- BUT THEY'VE ALWAYS *DEFEATED* ME! I FINALLY GAVE UP-- WENT INTO HIDING---
BUT NOW, PERHAPS--
EXACTLY! WITH YOUR STRANGE POWER, AND MY BRAIN, I PROMISE YOU THAT YOU SHALL *SUCCEED* THIS TIME!

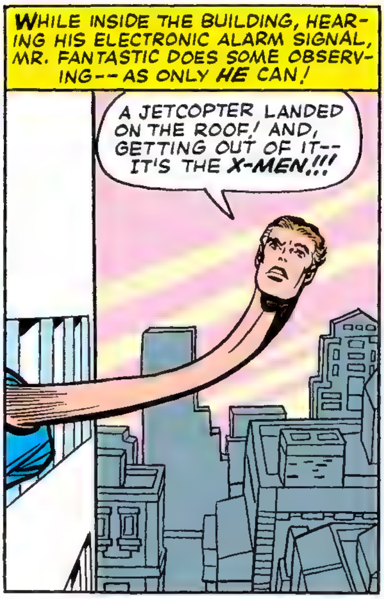

HERE IS A LEAD-LINED PROTECTIVE SUIT TO SHIELD YOU FROM RADIO-ACTIVE POISONING! PUT IT ON! FOR YOU ARE ABOUT TO MAKE YOUR GREATEST PUPPET--ABOUT TO WIN YOUR GREATEST VICTORY!
YOU SOUND SO CONFIDENT-- I CAN'T HELP BUT BELIEVE YOU!

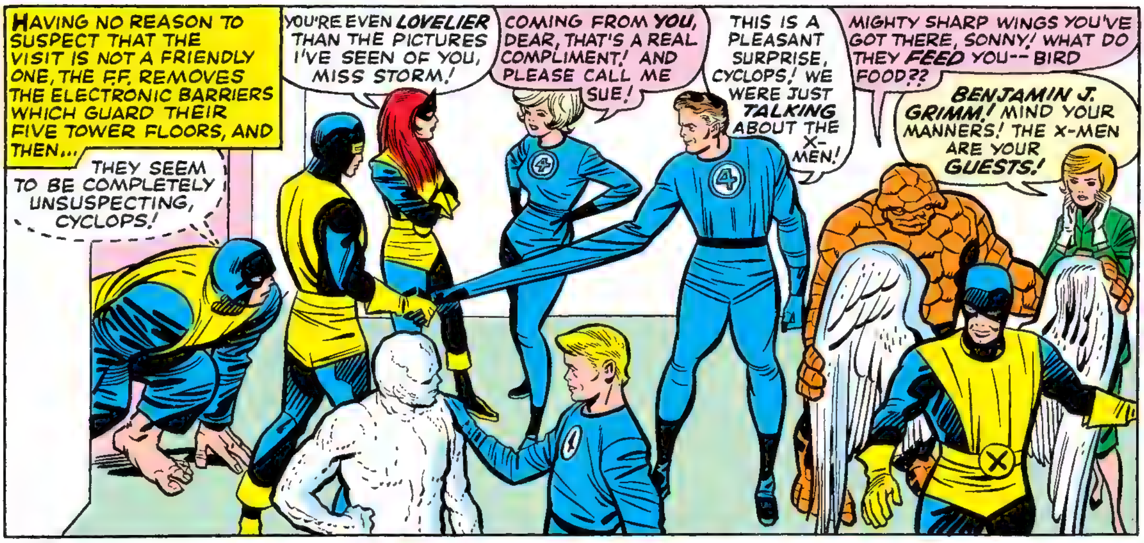

FOR WEEKS I HAVE EXAMINED EVERY FACT I COULD LEARN ABOUT THE *X-MEN*-- TRYING TO DEDUCE WHAT THEIR *LEADER* LOOKS LIKE! ON THAT TABLE IN FRONT OF YOU IS A ROUGH MOLD OF A HEAD--A HEAD WHICH I BELIEVE MUST RESEMBLE THE MYSTERIOUS *PROFESSOR X!*
I THINK I BEGIN TO UNDERSTAND...
USE THAT HEAD AS A *MODEL!* I WILL NOW DESCRIBE WHAT I BELIEVE HIS *BODY* LOOKS LIKE! I WANT YOU TO FASHION A *PUPPET* OF PROFESSOR X, USING YOUR MAGICAL RADIOACTIVE CLAY--A PUPPET THAT *MUST* OBEY YOUR WILL!
GOOD! GOOD! DON'T STOP! YOU ARE TRULY A MASTER SCULPTOR! WHEN YOU HAVE FINISHED, PROFESSOR X WILL BE IN OUR POWER--AND THAT MEANS HIS *X-MEN* WILL BE *OURS* TO COMMAND!!
IT IS *DONE!* NOW CONCENTRATE! *CONCENTRATE* AS NEVER BEFORE! YOU *MUST* PUT HIM UNDER YOUR CONTROL! *YOU MUST!!*
I *WILL!* I'VE NEVER FAILED *YET!* JUST BE QUIET! LET ME KEEP LOOKING AT MY PUPPET! LET ME KEEP PROJECTING MY COMMANDS TO IT--!!
AND, AT THAT MOMENT, IN A QUIET, ISOLATED PRIVATE SCHOOL IN THE HEART OF WESTCHESTER COUNTY, ONE OF THE WORLD'S MOST FAMOUS MUTANTS RECOILS IN SHOCK AS A STRANGER'S THOUGHT TOUCHES HIS BRILLIANT BRAIN!
SOMEONE IS TRYING TO EXERCISE MENTAL CONTROL OVER ME! I CAN *FEEL* IT!
BUT, THOUGH HIS BODY IS CONFINED TO A WHEELCHAIR, HIS MIND IS THE MOST POWERFUL ON EARTH! WITH EVERY OUNCE OF MENTAL STRENGTH HE CAN MUSTER, HE FIGHTS BACK!
NO! *NO!*
I'M NOT GETTING THE DESIRED RESULT! CAN MY PUPPET BE AT FAULT?
NO! I EXPECTED THIS TO HAPPEN! USE MORE RADIOACTIVE CLAY! *INCREASE* YOUR POWER--HURRY!

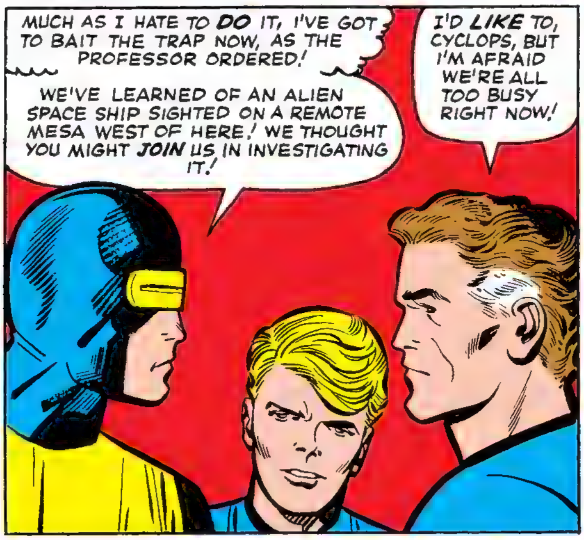

I HAVE IT ALL FIGURED OUT TO THE LAST CENTIMETER! USE ANOTHER FOUR AND A THIRD GRAMS OF RADIOACTIVE CLAY --*HURRY!*
ENOUGH!! IF YOU CHANGE THE RATIO BY ONE THOUSANDTH OF A DEGREE, YOU'LL UPSET ALL MY PREARRANGED CALCULATIONS!!
I'M DOING MY BEST--BUT THE SUBJECT IS STILL RESISTING! WHAT MANNER OF MAN *IS* HE??
"WHAT MANNER OF MAN?" INDEED! PROFESSOR X IS FAR MORE THAN JUST A MAN! FOR HE IS A TRUE *MUTANT*--ONE OF THE HIDDEN RACE OF *HOMO SUPERIOR*--THE MEN WITH AN *EXTRA* POWER--THE *X-MEN!!*
I MUST FIGHT THE PRESSURE IN MY BRAIN!!
BUT EVEN AN *X-MAN* IS NOT INFALLIBLE! THE MAD THINKER HAS ESTIMATED THE AMOUNT OF RADIOACTIVE CLAY NEEDED TO AFFECT PROFESSOR X CORRECTLY TO THE LAST CENTIMETER! AND SO--
IF AN EVIL POWER GAINS CONTROL OF ME--WHAT WILL HAPPEN TO--MY X-MEN??
FOR *THEIR* SAKE I MUST FIGHT--MUST RESIST--BUT--I CAN'T!! PRESSURE IS TOO GREAT!! I MUST--OBEY!
AND SO, FINALLY--THE MAGNIFICENT BRAIN OF PROFESSOR X IS PUT UNDER THE DIABOLICAL CONTROL OF THE PUPPET MASTER AND THE MAD THINKER!!
PROFESSOR X!! THIS IS YOUR *MASTER* SPEAKING! YOU MUST DO AS I COMMAND! *THESE* ARE YOUR ORDERS...
SECONDS LATER, THE HAPLESS PROFESSOR MENTALLY SUMMONS HIS LOYAL *"STUDENTS"!..*
I HAVE NEW ORDERS FOR YOU! YOU MUST OBEY WITHOUT QUESTION!
OF *COURSE*, SIR! WHAT ARE THE ORDERS?
YOU ARE TO FIND THE *FANTASTIC FOUR*--TRAP THEM--AND THEN--*DESTROY THEM!!*
YOU CAN'T BE *SERIOUS!!* IT'S SOME SORT OF SUBTLE JOKE!
NO, HANK! LOOK AT HIS FACE--HIS EYES! HE'S NOT JOKING--HE *MEANS* IT!

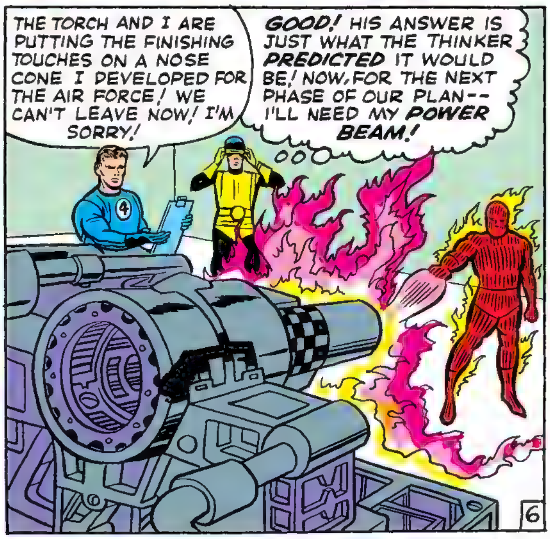

BUT WHY, PROFESSOR?? THERE SEEMS TO BE NO LOGIC TO IT!
I'LL DECIDE THAT! REMEMBER, THE POWER OF MY MUTANT BRAIN ENABLES ME TO "LISTEN IN" TO OTHER PEOPLE'S THOUGHTS! THUS HAVE I LEARNED THAT THE FANTASTIC FOUR PLAN WORLD DOMINATION! THEY MUST BE STOPPED!! AND ONLY WE CAN DO IT! NOW GO!

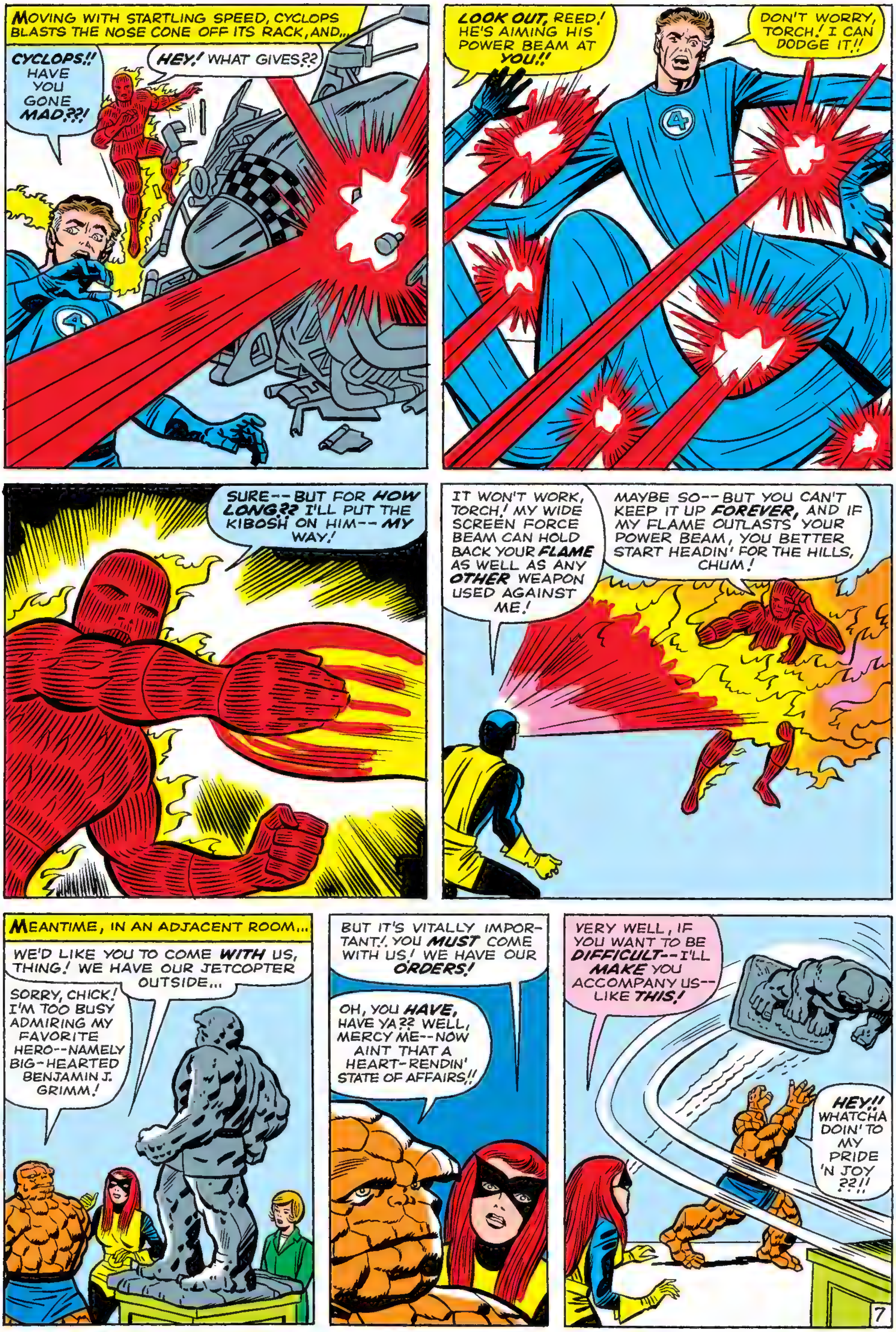

MINUTES LATER, A LATE MODEL JETCOPTER NOISILY APPROACHES THE SKYSCRAPER HELIPORT ATOP THE ROOF OF THE WORLD-FAMOUS BAXTER BUILDING...
HERE WE ARE! REMEMBER THE PROFESSOR'S ORDERS -- GET THE F.F. OFF-GUARD! MAKE THEM THINK THIS IS A PEACEFUL VISIT!

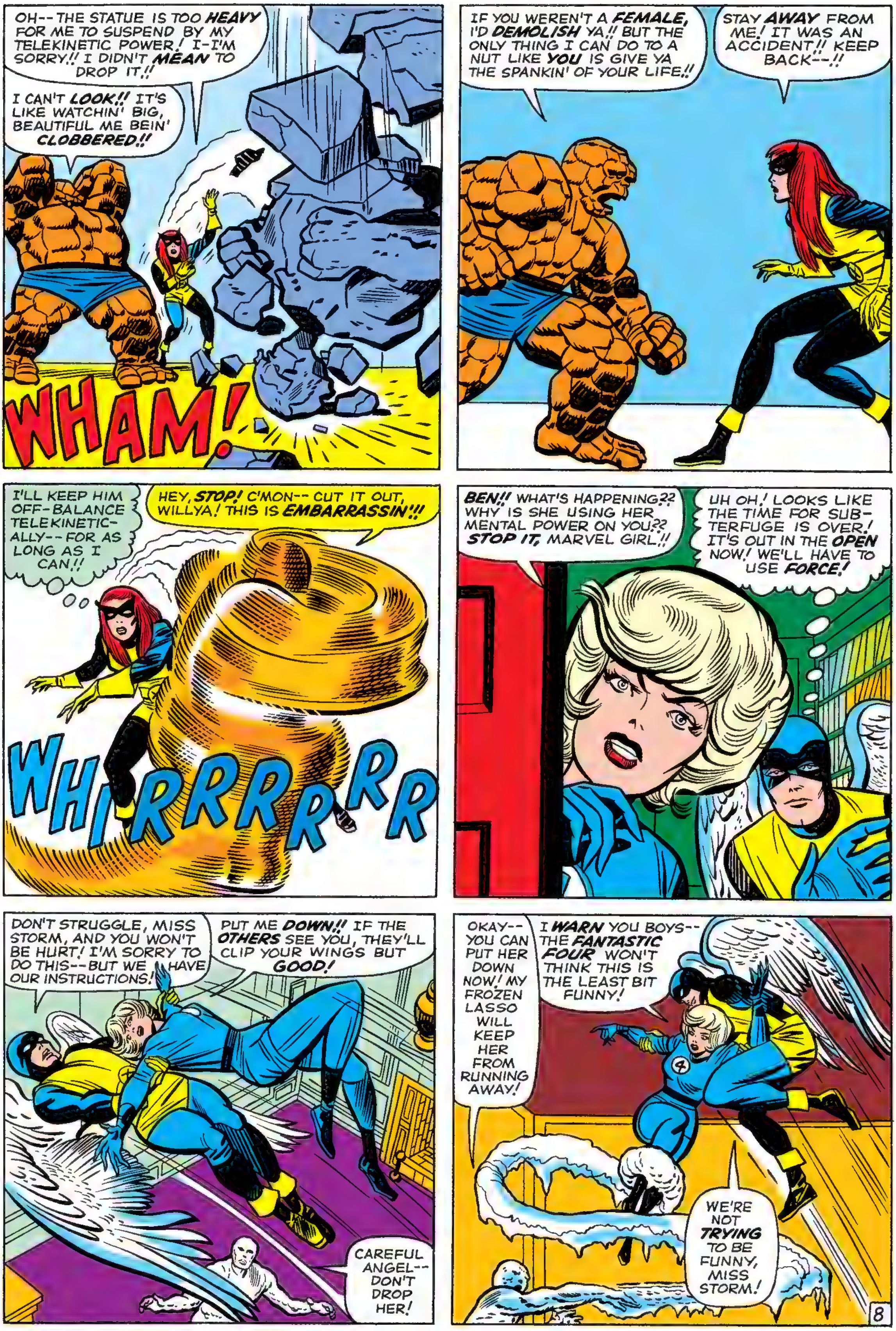

WHILE INSIDE THE BUILDING, HEARING HIS ELECTRONIC ALARM SIGNAL, MR. FANTASTIC DOES SOME OBSERVING -- AS ONLY HE CAN!
A JETCOPTER LANDED ON THE ROOF! AND, GETTING OUT OF IT -- IT'S THE X-MEN!!!

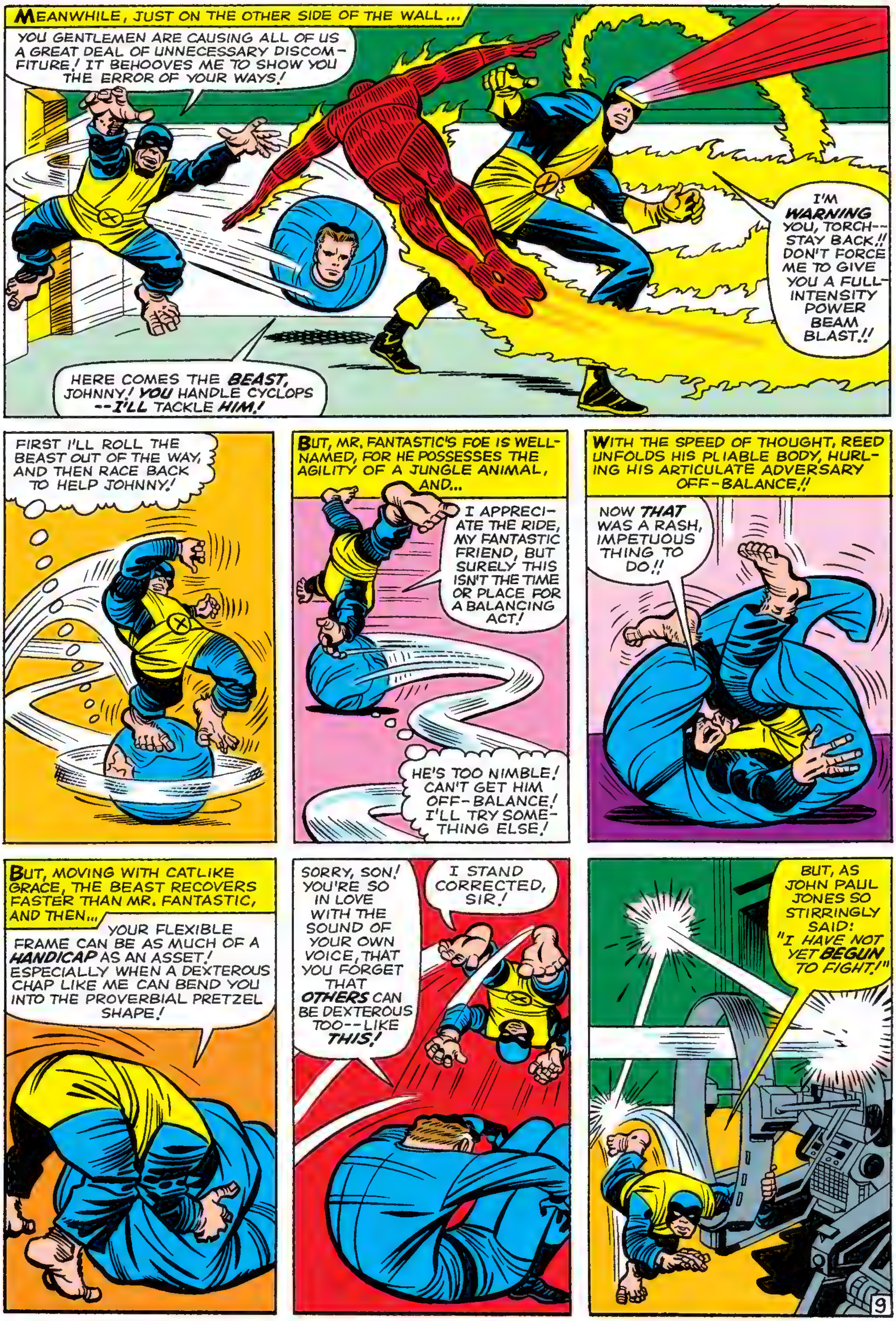

HAVING NO REASON TO SUSPECT THAT THE VISIT IS NOT A FRIENDLY ONE, THE F.F. REMOVES THE ELECTRONIC BARRIERS WHICH GUARD THEIR FIVE TOWER FLOORS, AND THEN...
THEY SEEM TO BE COMPLETELY UNSUSPECTING, CYCLOPS!
YOU'RE EVEN LOVELIER THAN THE PICTURES I'VE SEEN OF YOU, MISS STORM!
COMING FROM YOU, DEAR, THAT'S A REAL COMPLIMENT! AND PLEASE CALL ME SUE!
THIS IS A PLEASANT SURPRISE, CYCLOPS! WE WERE JUST TALKING ABOUT THE X-MEN!
MIGHTY SHARP WINGS YOU'VE GOT THERE, SONNY! WHAT DO THEY FEED YOU -- BIRD FOOD??
BENJAMIN J. GRIMM! MIND YOUR MANNERS! THE X-MEN ARE YOUR GUESTS!

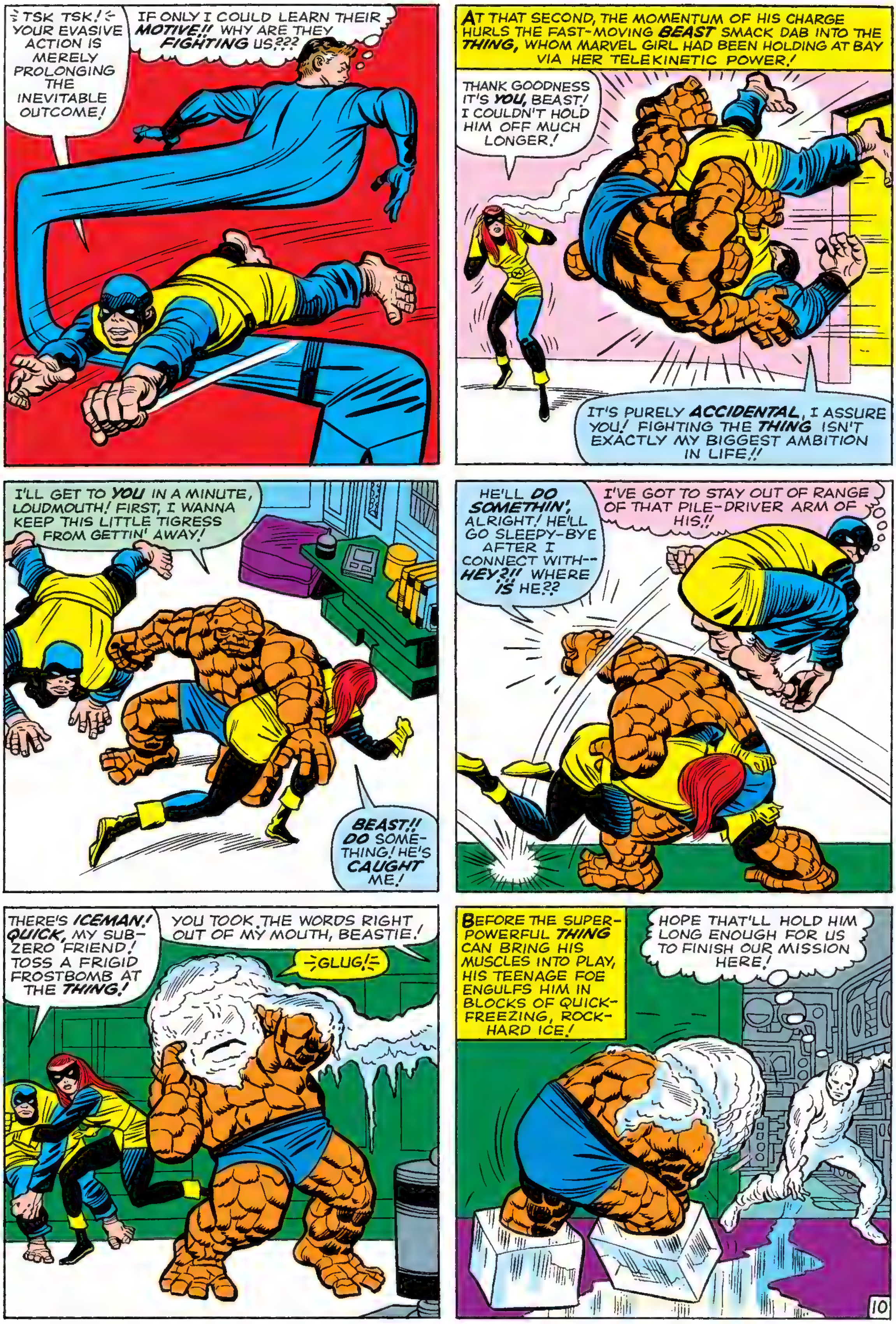

MUCH AS I HATE TO DO IT, I'VE GOT TO BAIT THE TRAP NOW, AS THE PROFESSOR ORDERED!
WE'VE LEARNED OF AN ALIEN SPACE SHIP SIGHTED ON A REMOTE MESA WEST OF HERE! WE THOUGHT YOU MIGHT JOIN US IN INVESTIGATING IT!
I'D LIKE TO, CYCLOPS, BUT I'M AFRAID WE'RE ALL TOO BUSY RIGHT NOW!

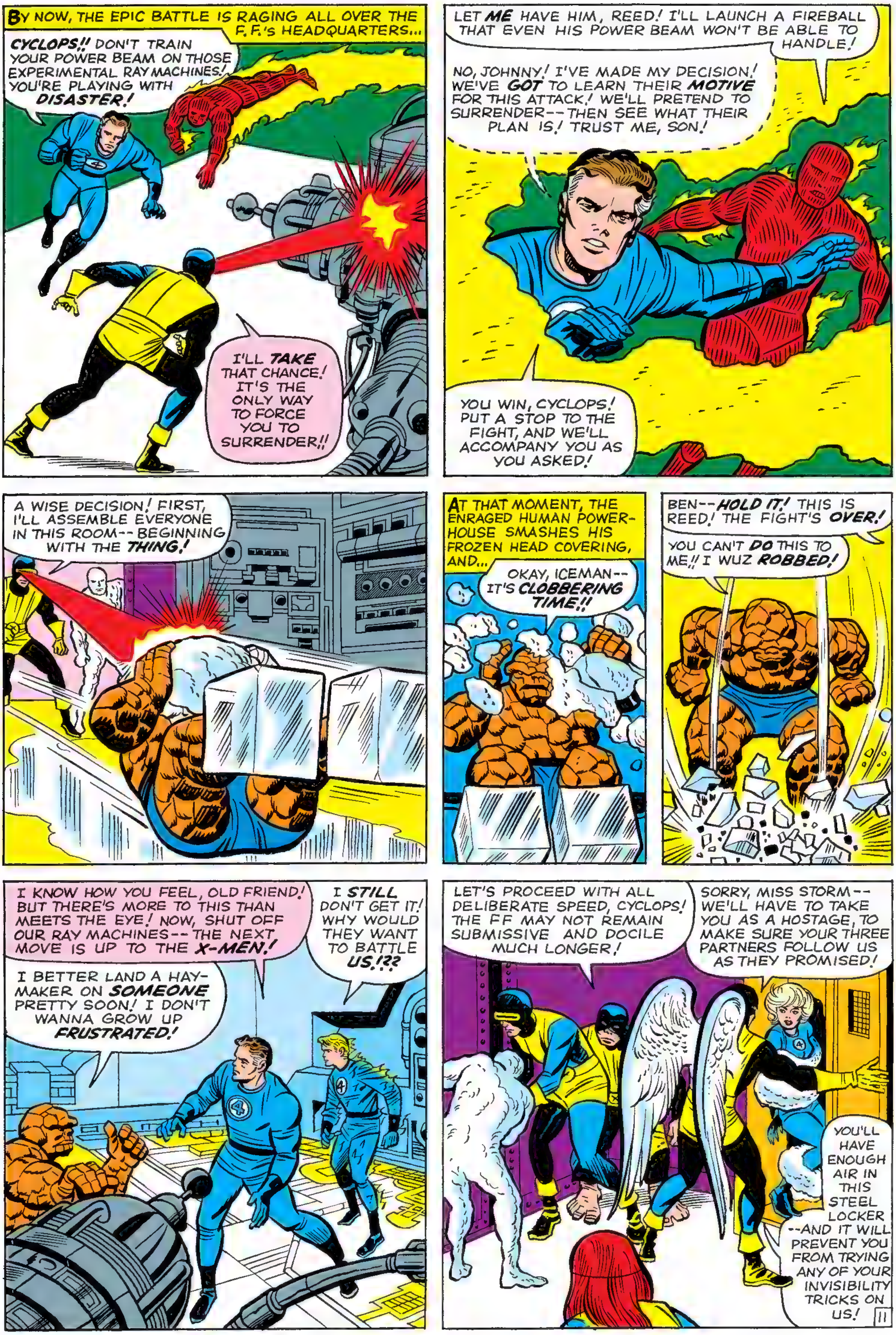

THE TORCH AND I ARE PUTTING THE FINISHING TOUCHES ON A NOSE CONE I DEVELOPED FOR THE AIR FORCE! WE CAN'T LEAVE NOW! I'M SORRY!
GOOD! HIS ANSWER IS JUST WHAT THE THINKER PREDICTED IT WOULD BE! NOW, FOR THE NEXT PHASE OF OUR PLAN -- I'LL NEED MY POWER BEAM!

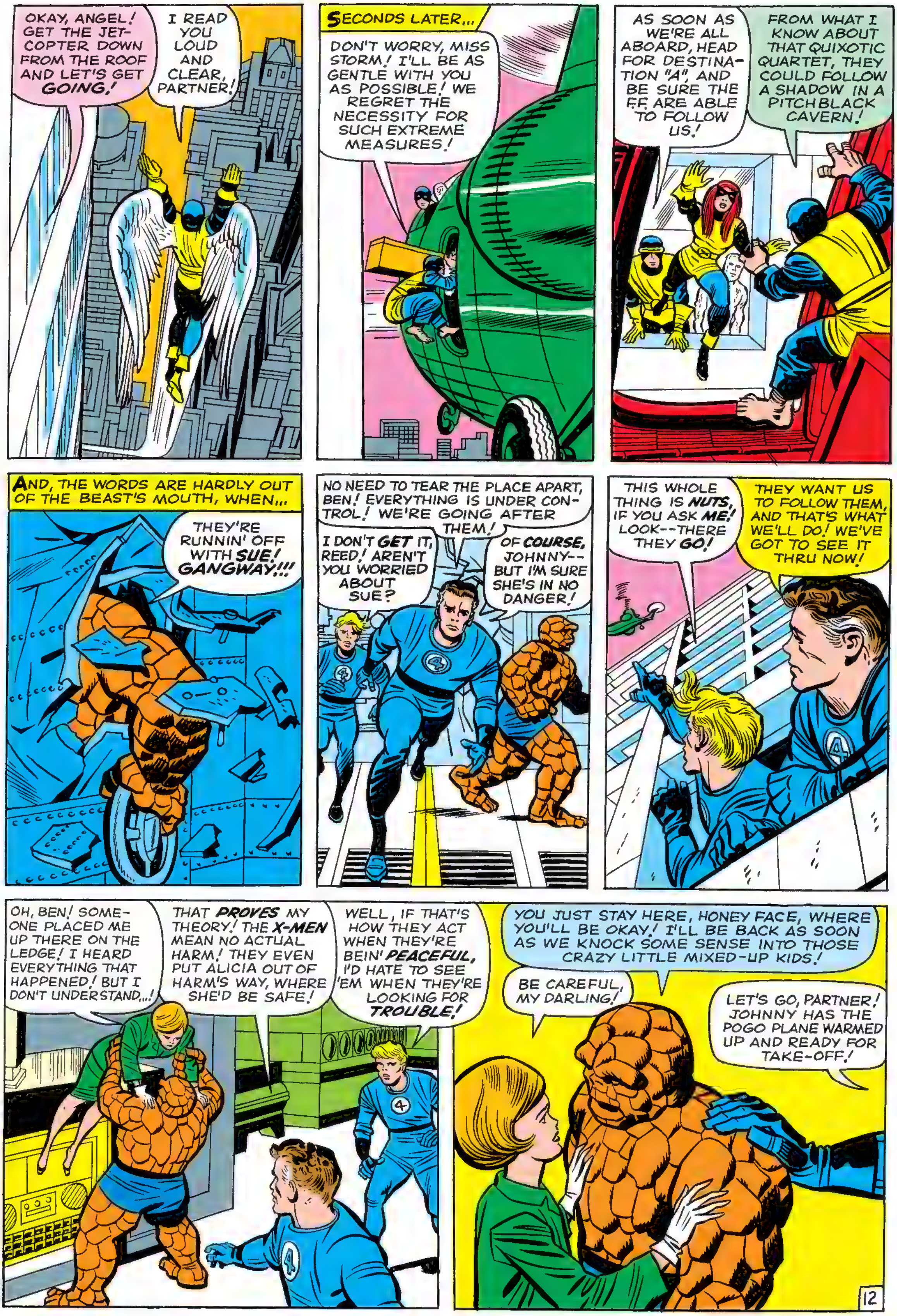

MOVING WITH STARTLING SPEED, CYCLOPS BLASTS THE NOSE CONE OFF ITS RACK, AND...
CYCLOPS!! HAVE YOU GONE MAD??!
HEY! WHAT GIVES??
LOOK OUT, REED! HE'S AIMING HIS POWER BEAM AT YOU!!
DON'T WORRY, TORCH! I CAN DODGE IT!!
SURE--BUT FOR HOW LONG?? I'LL PUT THE KIBOSH ON HIM--MY WAY!
IT WON'T WORK, TORCH! MY WIDE SCREEN FORCE BEAM CAN HOLD BACK YOUR FLAME AS WELL AS ANY OTHER WEAPON USED AGAINST ME!
MAYBE SO--BUT YOU CAN'T KEEP IT UP FOREVER, AND IF MY FLAME OUTLASTS YOUR POWER BEAM, YOU BETTER START HEADIN' FOR THE HILLS, CHUM!
MEANTIME, IN AN ADJACENT ROOM...
WE'D LIKE YOU TO COME WITH US, THING! WE HAVE OUR JETCOPTER OUTSIDE...
SORRY, CHICK! I'M TOO BUSY ADMIRING MY FAVORITE HERO--NAMELY BIG-HEARTED BENJAMIN J. GRIMM!
BUT IT'S VITALLY IMPORTANT! YOU MUST COME WITH US! WE HAVE OUR ORDERS!
OH, YOU HAVE, HAVE YA?? WELL, MERCY ME--NOW AINT THAT A HEART-RENDIN' STATE OF AFFAIRS!!
VERY WELL, IF YOU WANT TO BE DIFFICULT--I'LL MAKE YOU ACCOMPANY US--LIKE THIS!
HEY!! WHATCHA DOIN' TO MY PRIDE 'N JOY ??!!

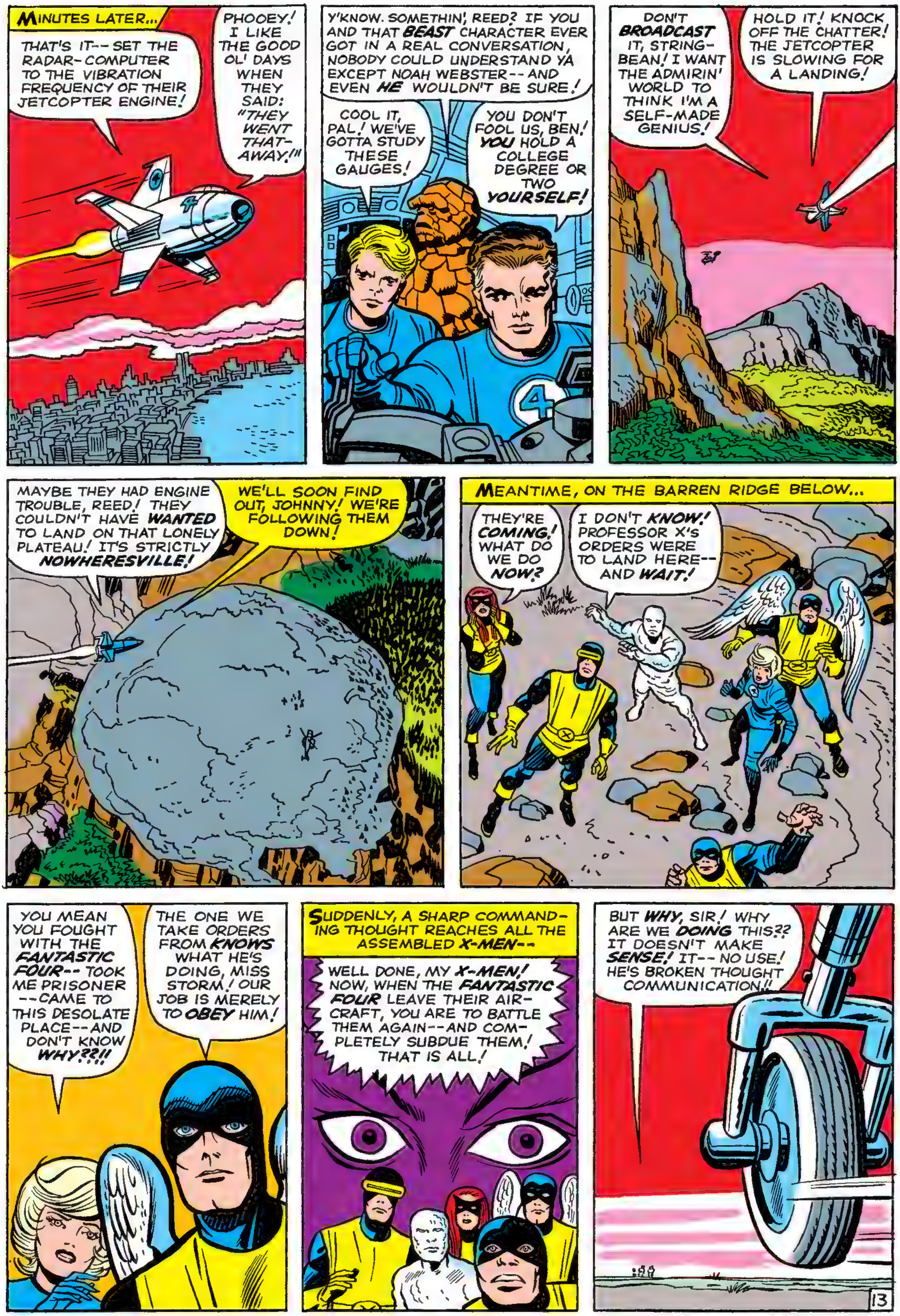

OH-- THE STATUE IS TOO HEAVY FOR ME TO SUSPEND BY MY TELEKINETIC POWER! I-I'M SORRY!! I DIDN'T MEAN TO DROP IT!!
I CAN'T LOOK!! IT'S LIKE WATCHIN' BIG, BEAUTIFUL ME BEIN' CLOBBERED!!
WHAM!
IF YOU WEREN'T A FEMALE, I'D DEMOLISH YA!! BUT THE ONLY THING I CAN DO TO A NUT LIKE YOU IS GIVE YA THE SPANKIN' OF YOUR LIFE!!
STAY AWAY FROM ME! IT WAS AN ACCIDENT!! KEEP BACK--!!
I'LL KEEP HIM OFF-BALANCE TELEKINETICALLY-- FOR AS LONG AS I CAN!!
HEY, STOP! C'MON-- CUT IT OUT, WILLYA! THIS IS EMBARRASSIN'!!!
WHIRRRRRRR
BEN!! WHAT'S HAPPENING?? WHY IS SHE USING HER MENTAL POWER ON YOU?? STOP IT, MARVEL GIRL!!
UH OH! LOOKS LIKE THE TIME FOR SUBTERFUGE IS OVER! IT'S OUT IN THE OPEN NOW! WE'LL HAVE TO USE FORCE!
DON'T STRUGGLE, MISS STORM, AND YOU WON'T BE HURT! I'M SORRY TO DO THIS-- BUT WE HAVE OUR INSTRUCTIONS!
PUT ME DOWN!! IF THE OTHERS SEE YOU, THEY'LL CLIP YOUR WINGS BUT GOOD!
CAREFUL ANGEL-- DON'T DROP HER!
OKAY-- YOU CAN PUT HER DOWN NOW! MY FROZEN LASSO WILL KEEP HER FROM RUNNING AWAY!
I WARN YOU BOYS-- THE FANTASTIC FOUR WON'T THINK THIS IS THE LEAST BIT FUNNY!
4
WE'RE NOT TRYING TO BE FUNNY, MISS STORM!

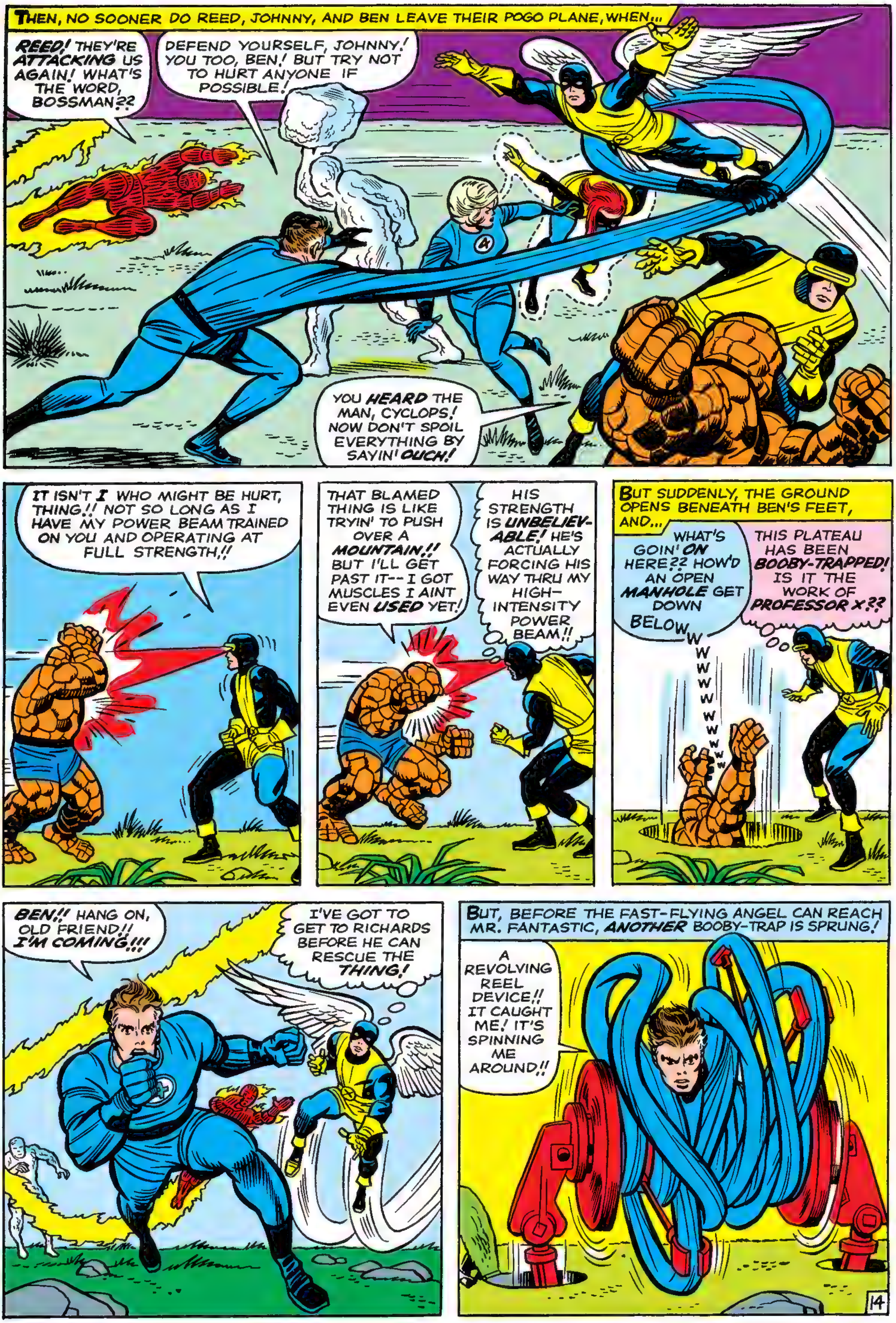

MEANWHILE, JUST ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE WALL...
YOU GENTLEMEN ARE CAUSING ALL OF US A GREAT DEAL OF UNNECESSARY DISCOMFITURE! IT BEHOOVES ME TO SHOW YOU THE ERROR OF YOUR WAYS!
I'M WARNING YOU, TORCH--STAY BACK!! DON'T FORCE ME TO GIVE YOU A FULL-INTENSITY POWER BEAM BLAST!!
HERE COMES THE BEAST, JOHNNY! YOU HANDLE CYCLOPS --I'LL TACKLE HIM!
FIRST I'LL ROLL THE BEAST OUT OF THE WAY, AND THEN RACE BACK TO HELP JOHNNY!
BUT, MR. FANTASTIC'S FOE IS WELL-NAMED, FOR HE POSSESSES THE AGILITY OF A JUNGLE ANIMAL, AND...
I APPRECIATE THE RIDE, MY FANTASTIC FRIEND, BUT SURELY THIS ISN'T THE TIME OR PLACE FOR A BALANCING ACT!
HE'S TOO NIMBLE! CAN'T GET HIM OFF-BALANCE! I'LL TRY SOMETHING ELSE!
WITH THE SPEED OF THOUGHT, REED UNFOLDS HIS PLIABLE BODY, HURLING HIS ARTICULATE ADVERSARY OFF-BALANCE!!
NOW THAT WAS A RASH, IMPETUOUS THING TO DO!!
BUT, MOVING WITH CATLIKE GRACE, THE BEAST RECOVERS FASTER THAN MR. FANTASTIC, AND THEN...
YOUR FLEXIBLE FRAME CAN BE AS MUCH OF A HANDICAP AS AN ASSET! ESPECIALLY WHEN A DEXTEROUS CHAP LIKE ME CAN BEND YOU INTO THE PROVERBIAL PRETZEL SHAPE!
SORRY, SON! YOU'RE SO IN LOVE WITH THE SOUND OF YOUR OWN VOICE, THAT YOU FORGET THAT OTHERS CAN BE DEXTEROUS TOO--LIKE THIS!
I STAND CORRECTED, SIR!
BUT, AS JOHN PAUL JONES SO STIRRINGLY SAID: "I HAVE NOT YET BEGUN TO FIGHT!"

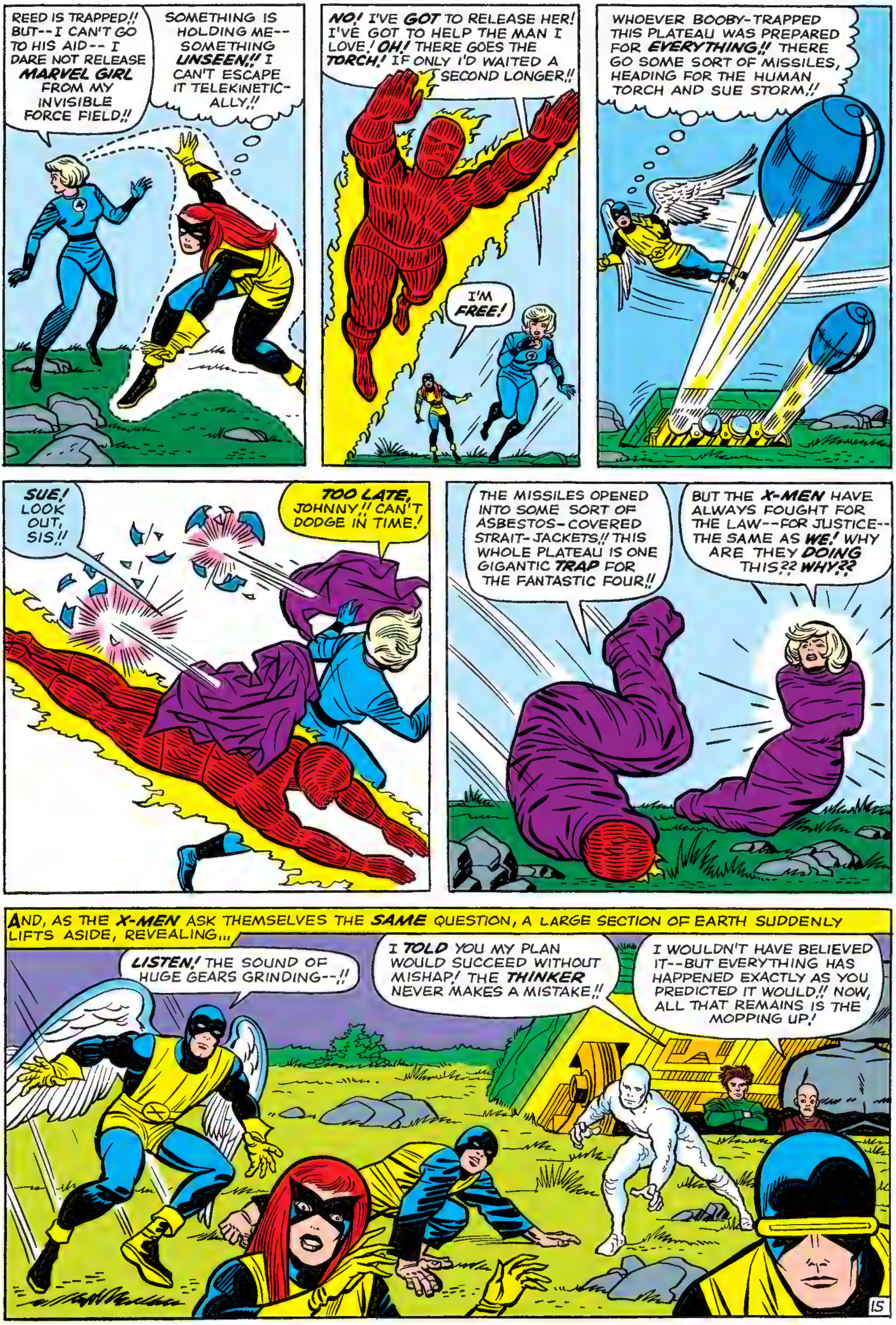

TSK TSK! YOUR EVASIVE ACTION IS MERELY PROLONGING THE INEVITABLE OUTCOME!
IF ONLY I COULD LEARN THEIR **MOTIVE!!** WHY ARE THEY **FIGHTING** US???
AT THAT SECOND, THE MOMENTUM OF HIS CHARGE HURLS THE FAST-MOVING **BEAST** SMACK DAB INTO THE **THING**, WHOM MARVEL GIRL HAD BEEN HOLDING AT BAY VIA HER TELEKINETIC POWER!
THANK GOODNESS IT'S **YOU**, BEAST! I COULDN'T HOLD HIM OFF MUCH LONGER!
IT'S PURELY **ACCIDENTAL**, I ASSURE YOU! FIGHTING THE **THING** ISN'T EXACTLY MY BIGGEST AMBITION IN LIFE!!
I'LL GET TO **YOU** IN A MINUTE, LOUDMOUTH! FIRST, I WANNA KEEP THIS LITTLE TIGRESS FROM GETTIN' AWAY!
BEAST!! DO SOMETHING! HE'S **CAUGHT** ME!
HE'LL **DO SOMETHIN'**, ALRIGHT! HE'LL GO SLEEPY-BYE AFTER I CONNECT WITH-- **HEY?!!** WHERE **IS** HE??
I'VE GOT TO STAY OUT OF RANGE OF THAT PILE-DRIVER ARM OF HIS!!
THERE'S **ICEMAN! QUICK**, MY SUB-ZERO FRIEND! TOSS A FRIGID FROSTBOMB AT THE **THING!**
YOU TOOK THE WORDS RIGHT OUT OF MY MOUTH, BEASTIE!
GLUG!
BEFORE THE SUPER-POWERFUL **THING** CAN BRING HIS MUSCLES INTO PLAY, HIS TEENAGE FOE ENGULFS HIM IN BLOCKS OF QUICK-FREEZING, ROCK-HARD ICE!
HOPE THAT'LL HOLD HIM LONG ENOUGH FOR US TO FINISH OUR MISSION HERE!

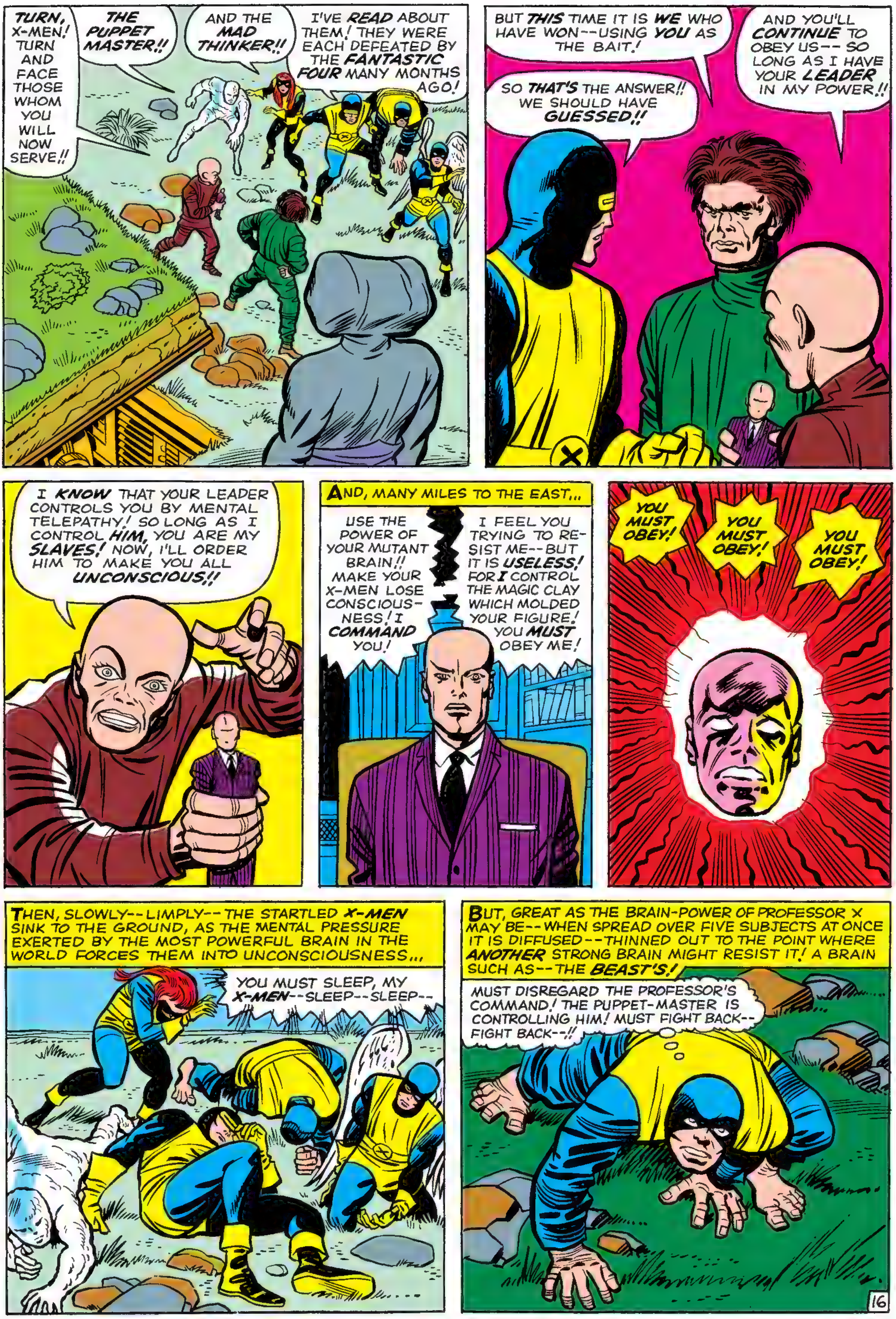

BY NOW, THE EPIC BATTLE IS RAGING ALL OVER THE F.F.'S HEADQUARTERS...
CYCLOPS!! DON'T TRAIN YOUR POWER BEAM ON THOSE EXPERIMENTAL RAY MACHINES! YOU'RE PLAYING WITH DISASTER!
I'LL TAKE THAT CHANCE! IT'S THE ONLY WAY TO FORCE YOU TO SURRENDER!!
LET ME HAVE HIM, REED! I'LL LAUNCH A FIREBALL THAT EVEN HIS POWER BEAM WON'T BE ABLE TO HANDLE!
NO, JOHNNY! I'VE MADE MY DECISION! WE'VE GOT TO LEARN THEIR MOTIVE FOR THIS ATTACK! WE'LL PRETEND TO SURRENDER--THEN SEE WHAT THEIR PLAN IS! TRUST ME, SON!
YOU WIN, CYCLOPS! PUT A STOP TO THE FIGHT, AND WE'LL ACCOMPANY YOU AS YOU ASKED!
A WISE DECISION! FIRST, I'LL ASSEMBLE EVERYONE IN THIS ROOM--BEGINNING WITH THE THING!
AT THAT MOMENT, THE ENRAGED HUMAN POWERHOUSE SMASHES HIS FROZEN HEAD COVERING, AND...
OKAY, ICEMAN--IT'S CLOBBERING TIME!!
BEN--HOLD IT! THIS IS REED! THE FIGHT'S OVER!
YOU CAN'T DO THIS TO ME!! I WUZ ROBBED!
I KNOW HOW YOU FEEL, OLD FRIEND! BUT THERE'S MORE TO THIS THAN MEETS THE EYE! NOW, SHUT OFF OUR RAY MACHINES--THE NEXT MOVE IS UP TO THE X-MEN!
I STILL DON'T GET IT! WHY WOULD THEY WANT TO BATTLE US!??
I BETTER LAND A HAYMAKER ON SOMEONE PRETTY SOON! I DON'T WANNA GROW UP FRUSTRATED!
LET'S PROCEED WITH ALL DELIBERATE SPEED, CYCLOPS! THE FF MAY NOT REMAIN SUBMISSIVE AND DOCILE MUCH LONGER!
SORRY, MISS STORM--WE'LL HAVE TO TAKE YOU AS A HOSTAGE, TO MAKE SURE YOUR THREE PARTNERS FOLLOW US AS THEY PROMISED!
YOU'LL HAVE ENOUGH AIR IN THIS STEEL LOCKER--AND IT WILL PREVENT YOU FROM TRYING ANY OF YOUR INVISIBILITY TRICKS ON US!
11

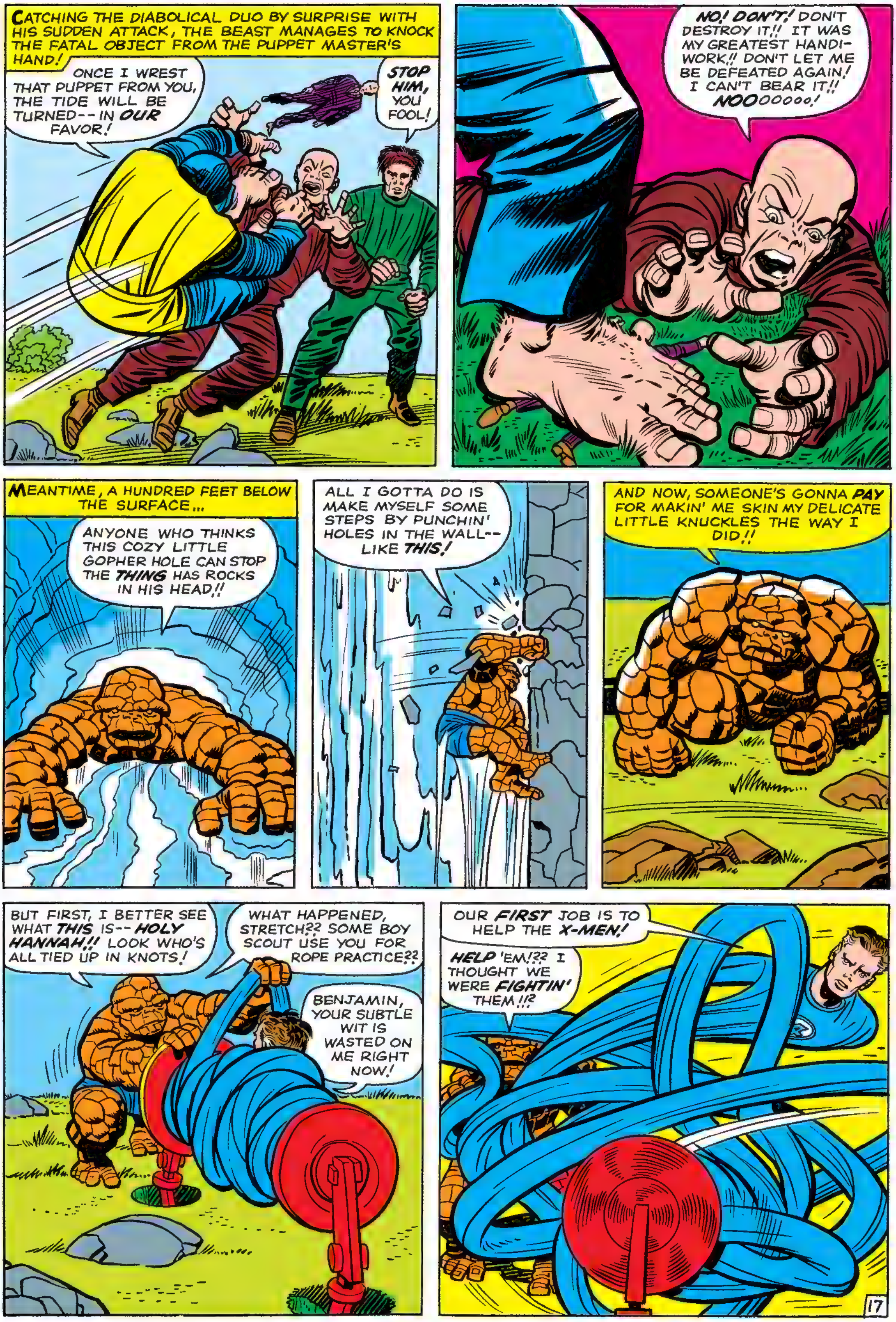

OKAY, ANGEL! GET THE JET-COPTER DOWN FROM THE ROOF AND LET'S GET **GOING!**
I READ YOU LOUD AND CLEAR, PARTNER!
SECONDS LATER...
DON'T WORRY, MISS STORM! I'LL BE AS GENTLE WITH YOU AS POSSIBLE! WE REGRET THE NECESSITY FOR SUCH EXTREME MEASURES!
AS SOON AS WE'RE ALL ABOARD, HEAD FOR DESTINATION "A", AND BE SURE THE F.F. ARE ABLE TO FOLLOW US!
FROM WHAT I KNOW ABOUT THAT QUIXOTIC QUARTET, THEY COULD FOLLOW A SHADOW IN A PITCHBLACK CAVERN!
AND, THE WORDS ARE HARDLY OUT OF THE BEAST'S MOUTH, WHEN...
THEY'RE RUNNIN' OFF WITH **SUE! GANGWAY!!!**
NO NEED TO TEAR THE PLACE APART, BEN! EVERYTHING IS UNDER CONTROL! WE'RE GOING AFTER THEM!
I DON'T **GET** IT, REED! AREN'T YOU WORRIED ABOUT SUE?
OF **COURSE,** JOHNNY-- BUT I'M SURE SHE'S IN NO DANGER!
THIS WHOLE THING IS **NUTS,** IF YOU ASK **ME!** LOOK--THERE THEY **GO!**
THEY WANT US TO FOLLOW THEM, AND THAT'S WHAT WE'LL DO! WE'VE GOT TO SEE IT THRU NOW!
OH, BEN! SOMEONE PLACED ME UP THERE ON THE LEDGE! I HEARD EVERYTHING THAT HAPPENED! BUT I DON'T UNDERSTAND...!
THAT **PROVES** MY THEORY! THE **X-MEN** MEAN NO ACTUAL HARM! THEY EVEN PUT ALICIA OUT OF HARM'S WAY, WHERE SHE'D BE SAFE!
WELL, IF THAT'S HOW THEY ACT WHEN THEY'RE BEIN' **PEACEFUL,** I'D HATE TO SEE 'EM WHEN THEY'RE LOOKING FOR **TROUBLE!**
YOU JUST STAY HERE, HONEY FACE, WHERE YOU'LL BE OKAY! I'LL BE BACK AS SOON AS WE KNOCK SOME SENSE INTO THOSE CRAZY LITTLE MIXED-UP KIDS!
BE CAREFUL, MY DARLING!
LET'S GO, PARTNER! JOHNNY HAS THE POGO PLANE WARMED UP AND READY FOR TAKE-OFF!

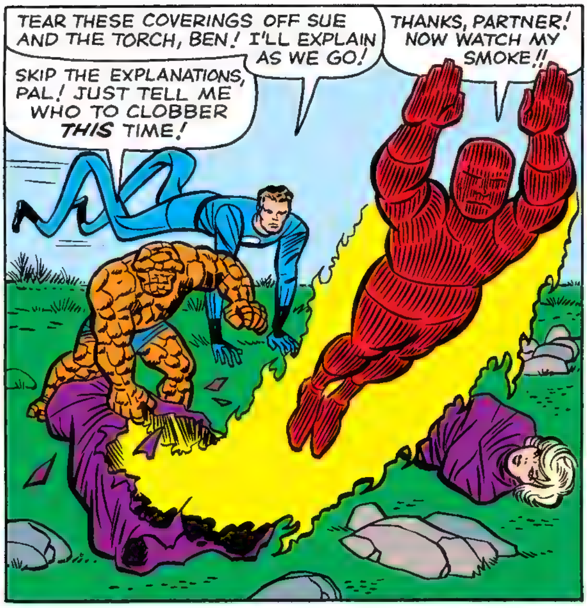

MINUTES LATER...
THAT'S IT-- SET THE RADAR-COMPUTER TO THE VIBRATION FREQUENCY OF THEIR JETCOPTER ENGINE!
PHOOEY! I LIKE THE GOOD OL' DAYS WHEN THEY SAID: "THEY WENT THAT-AWAY!"
Y'KNOW. SOMETHIN', REED? IF YOU AND THAT BEAST CHARACTER EVER GOT IN A REAL CONVERSATION, NOBODY COULD UNDERSTAND YA EXCEPT NOAH WEBSTER-- AND EVEN HE WOULDN'T BE SURE!
COOL IT, PAL! WE'VE GOTTA STUDY THESE GAUGES!
YOU DON'T FOOL US, BEN! YOU HOLD A COLLEGE DEGREE OR TWO YOURSELF!
DON'T BROADCAST IT, STRING-BEAN! I WANT THE ADMIRIN' WORLD TO THINK I'M A SELF-MADE GENIUS!
HOLD IT! KNOCK OFF THE CHATTER! THE JETCOPTER IS SLOWING FOR A LANDING!
MAYBE THEY HAD ENGINE TROUBLE, REED! THEY COULDN'T HAVE WANTED TO LAND ON THAT LONELY PLATEAU! IT'S STRICTLY NOWHERESVILLE!
WE'LL SOON FIND OUT, JOHNNY! WE'RE FOLLOWING THEM DOWN!
MEANTIME, ON THE BARREN RIDGE BELOW...
THEY'RE COMING! WHAT DO WE DO NOW?
I DON'T KNOW! PROFESSOR X'S ORDERS WERE TO LAND HERE-- AND WAIT!
YOU MEAN YOU FOUGHT WITH THE FANTASTIC FOUR-- TOOK ME PRISONER --CAME TO THIS DESOLATE PLACE--AND DON'T KNOW WHY??!!
THE ONE WE TAKE ORDERS FROM KNOWS WHAT HE'S DOING, MISS STORM! OUR JOB IS MERELY TO OBEY HIM!
SUDDENLY, A SHARP COMMANDING THOUGHT REACHES ALL THE ASSEMBLED X-MEN--
WELL DONE, MY X-MEN! NOW, WHEN THE FANTASTIC FOUR LEAVE THEIR AIRCRAFT, YOU ARE TO BATTLE THEM AGAIN--AND COMPLETELY SUBDUE THEM! THAT IS ALL!
BUT WHY, SIR! WHY ARE WE DOING THIS?? IT DOESN'T MAKE SENSE! IT-- NO USE! HE'S BROKEN THOUGHT COMMUNICATION!!

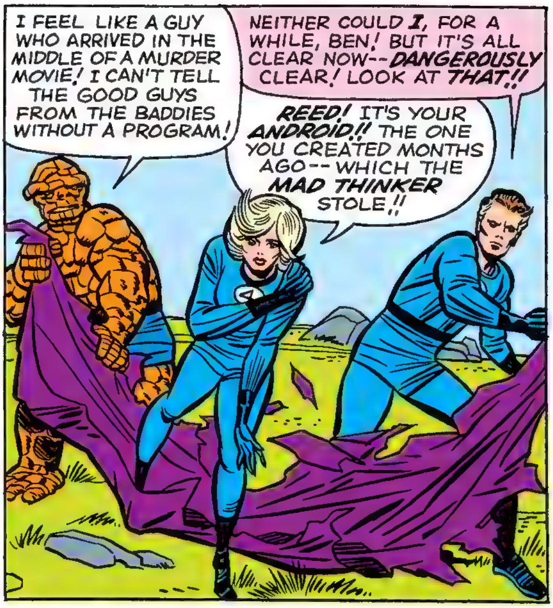

THEN, NO SOONER DO REED, JOHNNY, AND BEN LEAVE THEIR POGO PLANE, WHEN...
REED! THEY'RE ATTACKING US AGAIN! WHAT'S THE WORD, BOSSMAN??
DEFEND YOURSELF, JOHNNY! YOU TOO, BEN! BUT TRY NOT TO HURT ANYONE IF POSSIBLE!
YOU HEARD THE MAN, CYCLOPS! NOW DON'T SPOIL EVERYTHING BY SAYIN' OUCH!
IT ISN'T I WHO MIGHT BE HURT, THING!! NOT SO LONG AS I HAVE MY POWER BEAM TRAINED ON YOU AND OPERATING AT FULL STRENGTH!!
THAT BLAMED THING IS LIKE TRYIN' TO PUSH OVER A MOUNTAIN!! BUT I'LL GET PAST IT-- I GOT MUSCLES I AINT EVEN USED YET!
HIS STRENGTH IS UNBELIEVABLE! HE'S ACTUALLY FORCING HIS WAY THRU MY HIGH-INTENSITY POWER BEAM!!
BUT SUDDENLY, THE GROUND OPENS BENEATH BEN'S FEET, AND...
WHAT'S GOIN' ON HERE?? HOW'D AN OPEN MANHOLE GET DOWN BELOWWWWWWWWWW
THIS PLATEAU HAS BEEN BOOBY-TRAPPED! IS IT THE WORK OF PROFESSOR X??
BEN!! HANG ON, OLD FRIEND!! I'M COMING!!!
I'VE GOT TO GET TO RICHARDS BEFORE HE CAN RESCUE THE THING!
BUT, BEFORE THE FAST-FLYING ANGEL CAN REACH MR. FANTASTIC, ANOTHER BOOBY-TRAP IS SPRUNG!
A REVOLVING REEL DEVICE!! IT CAUGHT ME! IT'S SPINNING ME AROUND!!

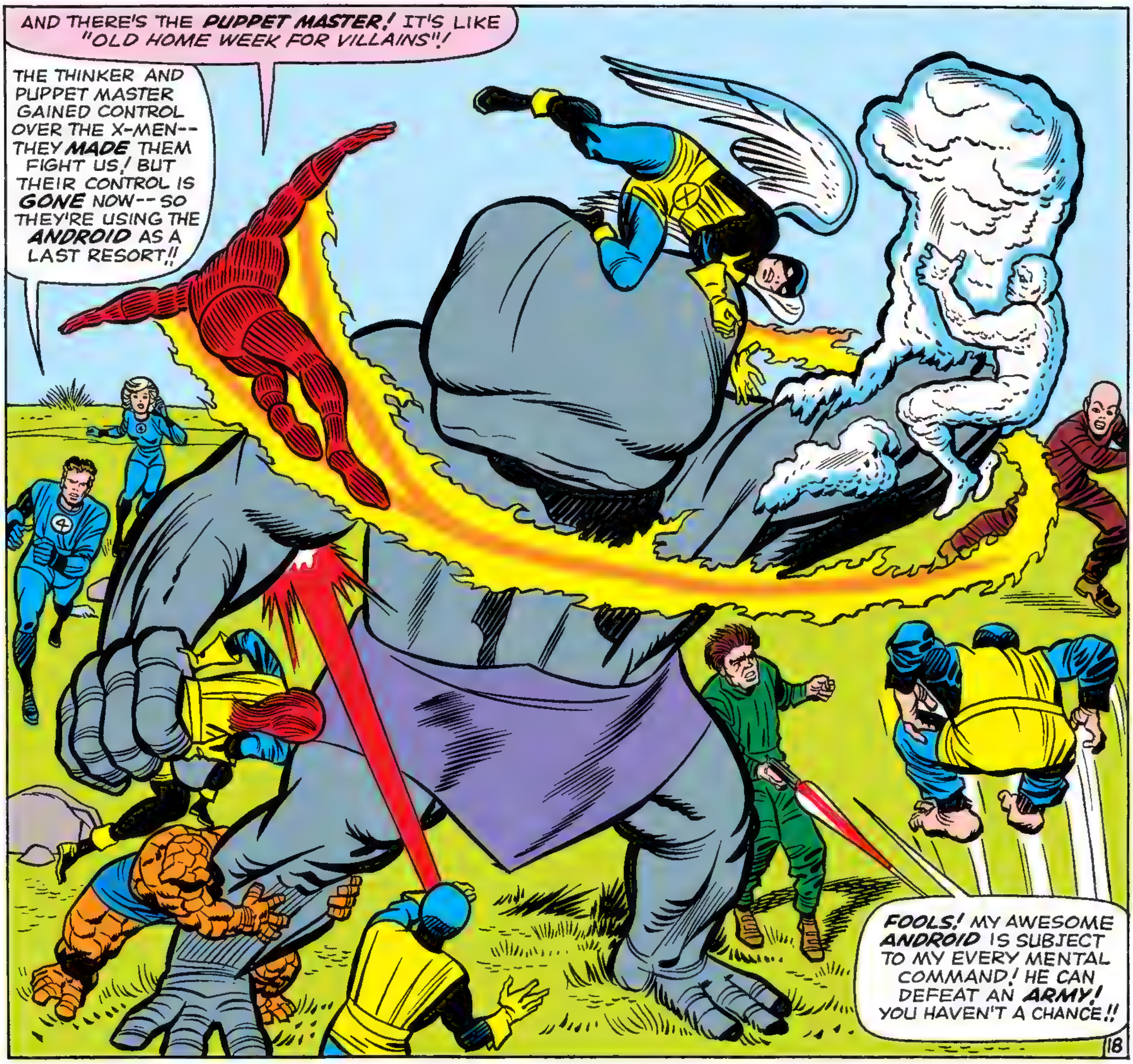

REED IS TRAPPED!! BUT--I CAN'T GO TO HIS AID--I DARE NOT RELEASE MARVEL GIRL FROM MY INVISIBLE FORCE FIELD!!
SOMETHING IS HOLDING ME--SOMETHING UNSEEN!! I CAN'T ESCAPE IT TELEKINETICALLY!!
NO! I'VE GOT TO RELEASE HER! I'VE GOT TO HELP THE MAN I LOVE! OH! THERE GOES THE TORCH! IF ONLY I'D WAITED A SECOND LONGER!!
I'M FREE!
WHOEVER BOOBY-TRAPPED THIS PLATEAU WAS PREPARED FOR EVERYTHING!! THERE GO SOME SORT OF MISSILES, HEADING FOR THE HUMAN TORCH AND SUE STORM!!
SUE! LOOK OUT, SIS!!
TOO LATE, JOHNNY!! CAN'T DODGE IN TIME!
THE MISSILES OPENED INTO SOME SORT OF ASBESTOS-COVERED STRAIT-JACKETS!! THIS WHOLE PLATEAU IS ONE GIGANTIC TRAP FOR THE FANTASTIC FOUR!!
BUT THE X-MEN HAVE ALWAYS FOUGHT FOR THE LAW--FOR JUSTICE--THE SAME AS WE! WHY ARE THEY DOING THIS?? WHY??
AND, AS THE X-MEN ASK THEMSELVES THE SAME QUESTION, A LARGE SECTION OF EARTH SUDDENLY LIFTS ASIDE, REVEALING...
LISTEN! THE SOUND OF HUGE GEARS GRINDING--!!
I TOLD YOU MY PLAN WOULD SUCCEED WITHOUT MISHAP! THE THINKER NEVER MAKES A MISTAKE!!
I WOULDN'T HAVE BELIEVED IT--BUT EVERYTHING HAS HAPPENED EXACTLY AS YOU PREDICTED IT WOULD!! NOW, ALL THAT REMAINS IS THE MOPPING UP!

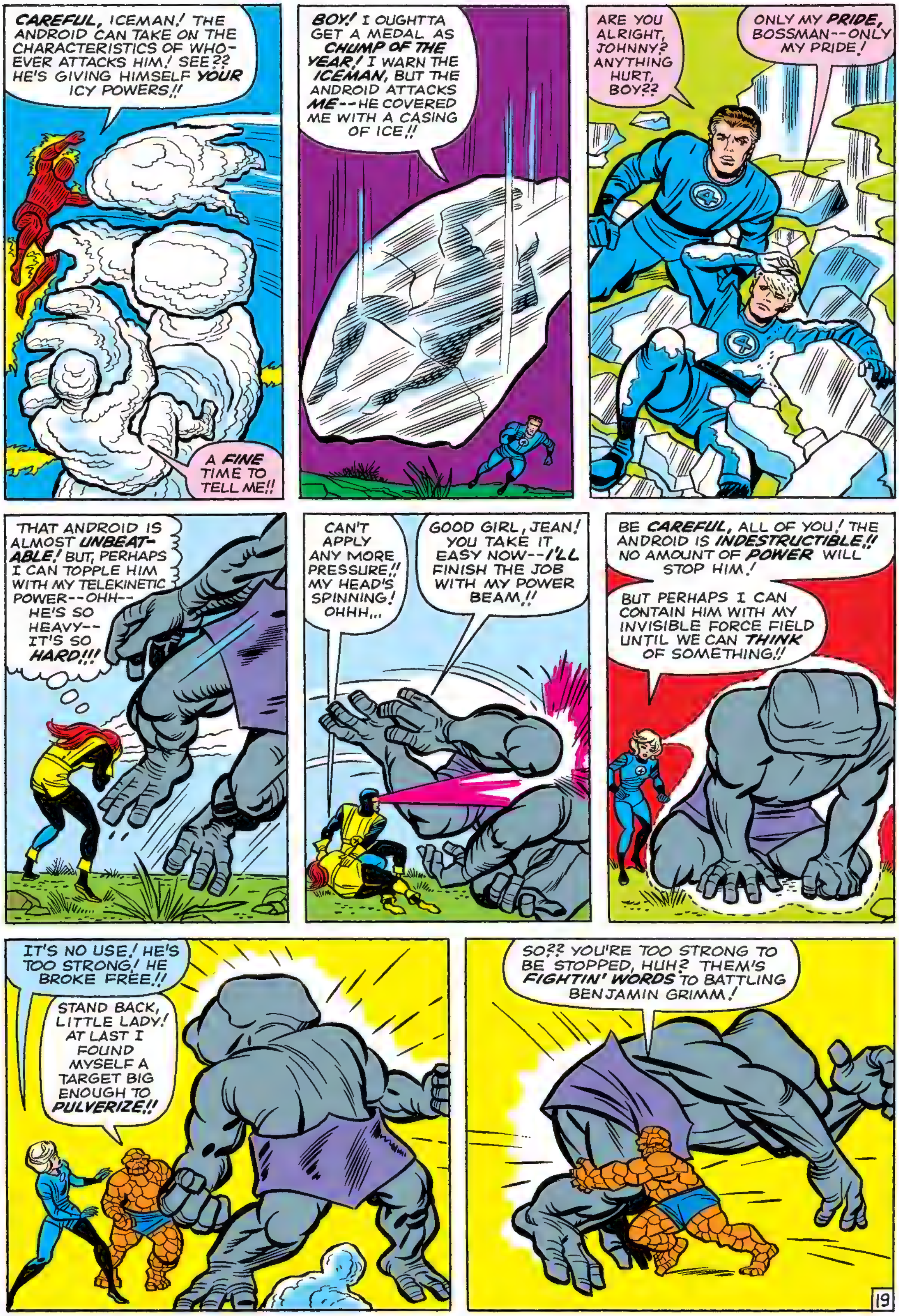

TURN, X-MEN! TURN AND FACE THOSE WHOM YOU WILL NOW SERVE!!
THE PUPPET MASTER!!
AND THE MAD THINKER!!
I'VE READ ABOUT THEM! THEY WERE EACH DEFEATED BY THE FANTASTIC FOUR MANY MONTHS AGO!
BUT THIS TIME IT IS WE WHO HAVE WON--USING YOU AS THE BAIT!
AND YOU'LL CONTINUE TO OBEY US-- SO LONG AS I HAVE YOUR LEADER IN MY POWER!!
SO THAT'S THE ANSWER!! WE SHOULD HAVE GUESSED!!
I KNOW THAT YOUR LEADER CONTROLS YOU BY MENTAL TELEPATHY! SO LONG AS I CONTROL HIM, YOU ARE MY SLAVES! NOW, I'LL ORDER HIM TO MAKE YOU ALL UNCONSCIOUS!!
AND, MANY MILES TO THE EAST...
USE THE POWER OF YOUR MUTANT BRAIN!! MAKE YOUR X-MEN LOSE CONSCIOUSNESS! I COMMAND YOU!
I FEEL YOU TRYING TO RESIST ME--BUT IT IS USELESS! FOR I CONTROL THE MAGIC CLAY WHICH MOLDED YOUR FIGURE! YOU MUST OBEY ME!
YOU MUST OBEY!
YOU MUST OBEY!
YOU MUST OBEY!
THEN, SLOWLY--LIMPLY--THE STARTLED X-MEN SINK TO THE GROUND, AS THE MENTAL PRESSURE EXERTED BY THE MOST POWERFUL BRAIN IN THE WORLD FORCES THEM INTO UNCONSCIOUSNESS...
YOU MUST SLEEP, MY X-MEN--SLEEP--SLEEP--
BUT, GREAT AS THE BRAIN-POWER OF PROFESSOR X MAY BE--WHEN SPREAD OVER FIVE SUBJECTS AT ONCE IT IS DIFFUSED--THINNED OUT TO THE POINT WHERE ANOTHER STRONG BRAIN MIGHT RESIST IT! A BRAIN SUCH AS--THE BEAST'S!
MUST DISREGARD THE PROFESSOR'S COMMAND! THE PUPPET-MASTER IS CONTROLLING HIM! MUST FIGHT BACK--FIGHT BACK--!!

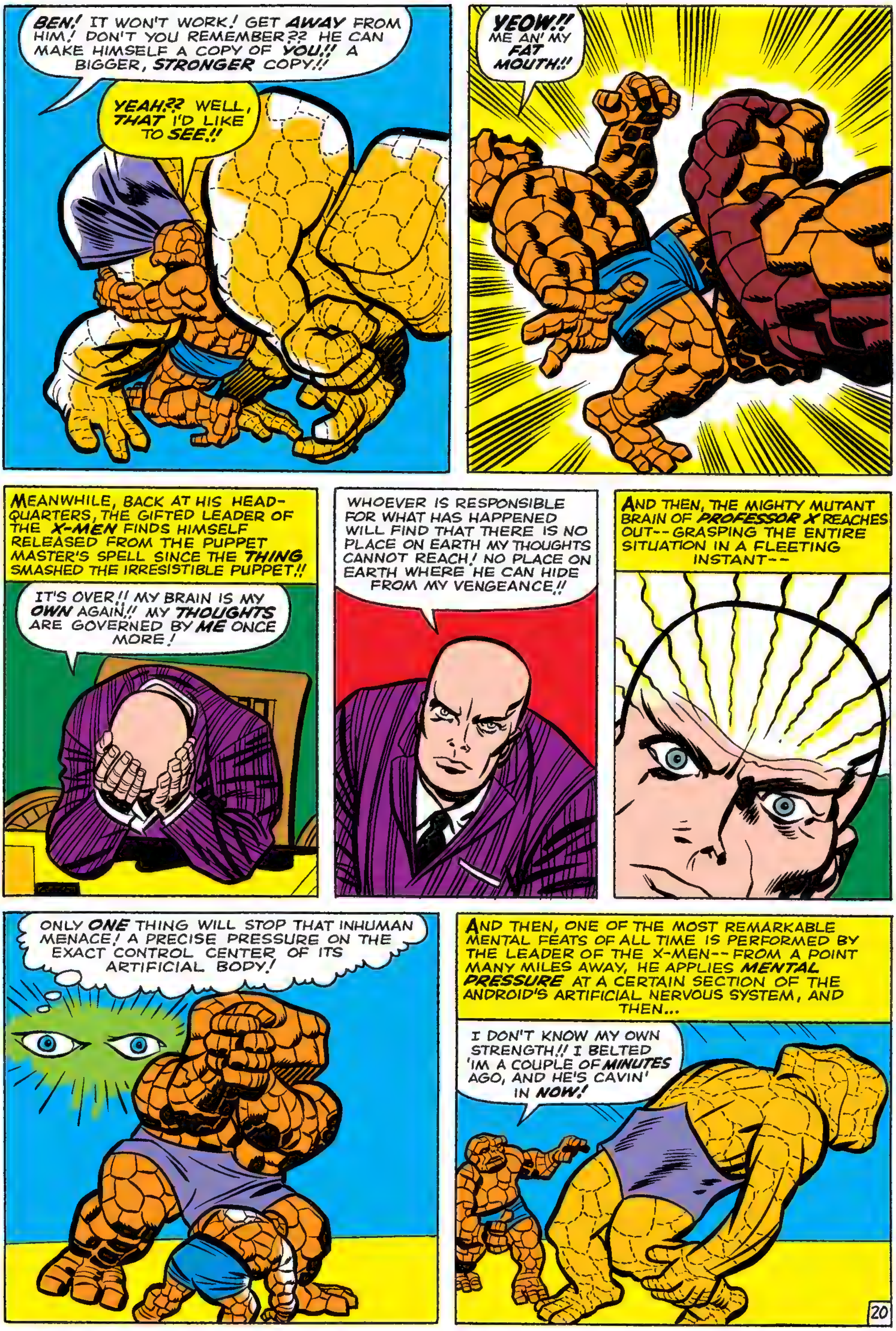

CATCHING THE DIABOLICAL DUO BY SURPRISE WITH HIS SUDDEN ATTACK, THE BEAST MANAGES TO KNOCK THE FATAL OBJECT FROM THE PUPPET MASTER'S HAND!
ONCE I WREST THAT PUPPET FROM YOU, THE TIDE WILL BE TURNED-- IN **OUR** FAVOR!
STOP HIM, YOU FOOL!
NO! DON'T! DON'T DESTROY IT!! IT WAS MY GREATEST HANDIWORK!! DON'T LET ME BE DEFEATED AGAIN! I CAN'T BEAR IT!! **NOO**ooooo!
MEANTIME, A HUNDRED FEET BELOW THE SURFACE...
ANYONE WHO THINKS THIS COZY LITTLE GOPHER HOLE CAN STOP THE **THING** HAS ROCKS IN HIS HEAD!!
ALL I GOTTA DO IS MAKE MYSELF SOME STEPS BY PUNCHIN' HOLES IN THE WALL-- LIKE **THIS!**
AND NOW, SOMEONE'S GONNA **PAY** FOR MAKIN' ME SKIN MY DELICATE LITTLE KNUCKLES THE WAY I DID!!
BUT FIRST, I BETTER SEE WHAT **THIS** IS-- **HOLY HANNAH!!** LOOK WHO'S ALL TIED UP IN KNOTS!
WHAT HAPPENED, STRETCH?? SOME BOY SCOUT USE YOU FOR ROPE PRACTICE??
BENJAMIN, YOUR SUBTLE WIT IS WASTED ON ME RIGHT NOW!
OUR **FIRST** JOB IS TO HELP THE **X-MEN!**
HELP 'EM!?? I THOUGHT WE WERE **FIGHTIN'** THEM!!?

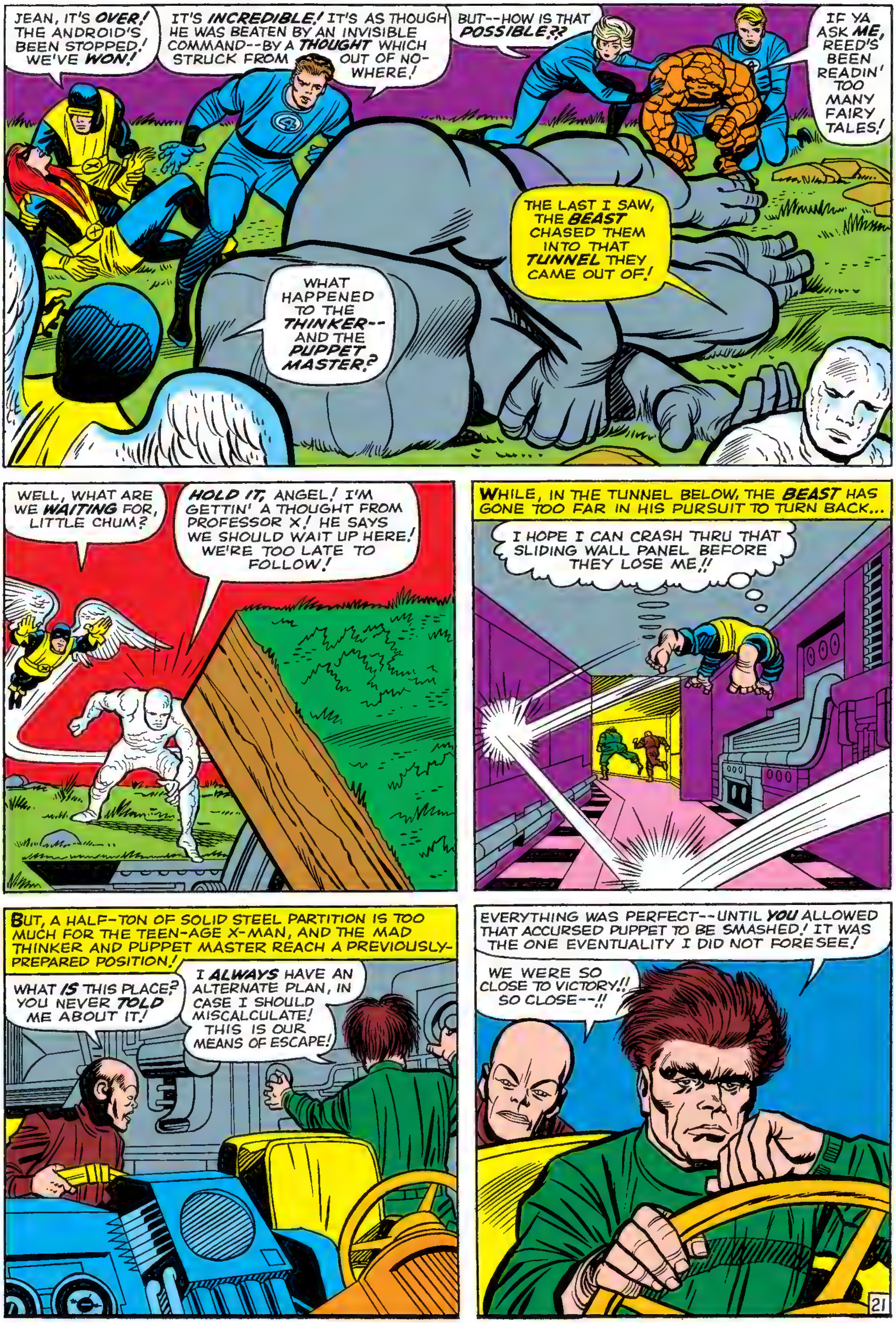

TEAR THESE COVERINGS OFF SUE AND THE TORCH, BEN! I'LL EXPLAIN AS WE GO!
SKIP THE EXPLANATIONS, PAL! JUST TELL ME WHO TO CLOBBER *THIS* TIME!
THANKS, PARTNER! NOW WATCH MY SMOKE!!

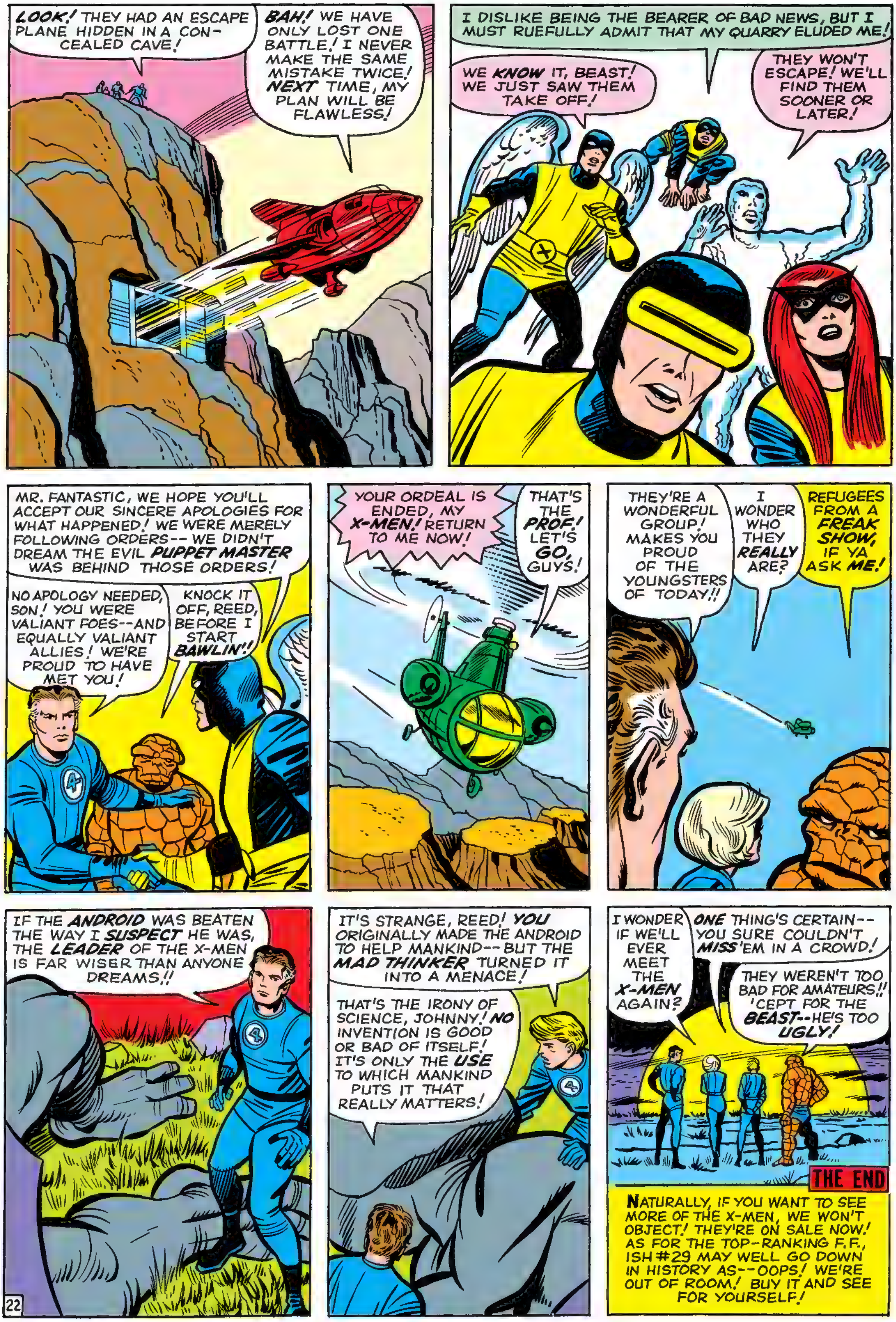

I FEEL LIKE A GUY WHO ARRIVED IN THE MIDDLE OF A MURDER MOVIE! I CAN'T TELL THE GOOD GUYS FROM THE BADDIES WITHOUT A PROGRAM!
NEITHER COULD *I*, FOR A WHILE, BEN! BUT IT'S ALL CLEAR NOW--*DANGEROUSLY* CLEAR! LOOK AT *THAT!!*
REED! IT'S YOUR *ANDROID!!* THE ONE YOU CREATED MONTHS AGO--WHICH THE *MAD THINKER* STOLE!!


AND THERE'S THE *PUPPET MASTER!* IT'S LIKE "*OLD HOME WEEK FOR VILLAINS*"!
THE THINKER AND PUPPET MASTER GAINED CONTROL OVER THE X-MEN--THEY *MADE* THEM FIGHT US! BUT THEIR CONTROL IS *GONE* NOW--SO THEY'RE USING THE *ANDROID* AS A LAST RESORT!!
FOOLS! MY AWESOME *ANDROID* IS SUBJECT TO MY EVERY MENTAL COMMAND! HE CAN DEFEAT AN *ARMY!* YOU HAVEN'T A CHANCE!!


CAREFUL, ICEMAN! THE ANDROID CAN TAKE ON THE CHARACTERISTICS OF WHOEVER ATTACKS HIM! SEE?? HE'S GIVING HIMSELF YOUR ICY POWERS!!
A FINE TIME TO TELL ME!!
BOY! I OUGHTTA GET A MEDAL AS CHUMP OF THE YEAR! I WARN THE ICEMAN, BUT THE ANDROID ATTACKS ME--HE COVERED ME WITH A CASING OF ICE!!
ARE YOU ALRIGHT, JOHNNY? ANYTHING HURT, BOY??
ONLY MY PRIDE, BOSSMAN--ONLY MY PRIDE!
THAT ANDROID IS ALMOST UNBEATABLE! BUT, PERHAPS I CAN TOPPLE HIM WITH MY TELEKINETIC POWER--OHH--HE'S SO HEAVY--IT'S SO HARD!!!
CAN'T APPLY ANY MORE PRESSURE!! MY HEAD'S SPINNING! OHHH...
GOOD GIRL, JEAN! YOU TAKE IT EASY NOW--I'LL FINISH THE JOB WITH MY POWER BEAM!!
BE CAREFUL, ALL OF YOU! THE ANDROID IS INDESTRUCTIBLE!! NO AMOUNT OF POWER WILL STOP HIM!
BUT PERHAPS I CAN CONTAIN HIM WITH MY INVISIBLE FORCE FIELD UNTIL WE CAN THINK OF SOMETHING!!
IT'S NO USE! HE'S TOO STRONG! HE BROKE FREE!!
STAND BACK, LITTLE LADY! AT LAST I FOUND MYSELF A TARGET BIG ENOUGH TO PULVERIZE!!
SO?? YOU'RE TOO STRONG TO BE STOPPED, HUH? THEM'S FIGHTIN' WORDS TO BATTLING BENJAMIN GRIMM!


BEN! IT WON'T WORK! GET AWAY FROM HIM! DON'T YOU REMEMBER?? HE CAN MAKE HIMSELF A COPY OF YOU!! A BIGGER, STRONGER COPY!!
YEAH?? WELL, THAT I'D LIKE TO SEE!!
YEOW!! ME AN' MY FAT MOUTH!!
MEANWHILE, BACK AT HIS HEADQUARTERS, THE GIFTED LEADER OF THE X-MEN FINDS HIMSELF RELEASED FROM THE PUPPET MASTER'S SPELL SINCE THE THING SMASHED THE IRRESISTIBLE PUPPET!!
IT'S OVER!! MY BRAIN IS MY OWN AGAIN!! MY THOUGHTS ARE GOVERNED BY ME ONCE MORE!
WHOEVER IS RESPONSIBLE FOR WHAT HAS HAPPENED WILL FIND THAT THERE IS NO PLACE ON EARTH MY THOUGHTS CANNOT REACH! NO PLACE ON EARTH WHERE HE CAN HIDE FROM MY VENGEANCE!!
AND THEN, THE MIGHTY MUTANT BRAIN OF PROFESSOR X REACHES OUT--GRASPING THE ENTIRE SITUATION IN A FLEETING INSTANT--
ONLY ONE THING WILL STOP THAT INHUMAN MENACE! A PRECISE PRESSURE ON THE EXACT CONTROL CENTER OF ITS ARTIFICIAL BODY!
AND THEN, ONE OF THE MOST REMARKABLE MENTAL FEATS OF ALL TIME IS PERFORMED BY THE LEADER OF THE X-MEN--FROM A POINT MANY MILES AWAY, HE APPLIES MENTAL PRESSURE AT A CERTAIN SECTION OF THE ANDROID'S ARTIFICIAL NERVOUS SYSTEM, AND THEN...
I DON'T KNOW MY OWN STRENGTH!! I BELTED 'IM A COUPLE OF MINUTES AGO, AND HE'S CAVIN' IN NOW!


JEAN, IT'S **OVER!** THE ANDROID'S BEEN STOPPED! WE'VE **WON!**
IT'S **INCREDIBLE!** IT'S AS THOUGH HE WAS BEATEN BY AN INVISIBLE COMMAND--BY A **THOUGHT** WHICH STRUCK FROM OUT OF NO-WHERE!
BUT--HOW IS THAT **POSSIBLE??**
IF YA ASK **ME**, REED'S BEEN READIN' TOO MANY FAIRY TALES!
THE LAST I SAW, THE **BEAST** CHASED THEM INTO THAT **TUNNEL** THEY CAME OUT OF!
WHAT HAPPENED TO THE **THINKER**--AND THE **PUPPET MASTER?**
WELL, WHAT ARE WE **WAITING** FOR, LITTLE CHUM?
HOLD IT, ANGEL! I'M GETTIN' A THOUGHT FROM PROFESSOR X! HE SAYS WE SHOULD WAIT UP HERE! WE'RE TOO LATE TO FOLLOW!
WHILE, IN THE TUNNEL BELOW, THE **BEAST** HAS GONE TOO FAR IN HIS PURSUIT TO TURN BACK...
I HOPE I CAN CRASH THRU THAT SLIDING WALL PANEL BEFORE THEY LOSE ME!!
BUT, A HALF-TON OF SOLID STEEL PARTITION IS TOO MUCH FOR THE TEEN-AGE X-MAN, AND THE MAD THINKER AND PUPPET MASTER REACH A PREVIOUSLY-PREPARED POSITION!
WHAT **IS** THIS PLACE? YOU NEVER **TOLD** ME ABOUT IT!
I **ALWAYS** HAVE AN ALTERNATE PLAN, IN CASE I SHOULD MISCALCULATE! THIS IS OUR MEANS OF ESCAPE!
EVERYTHING WAS PERFECT--UNTIL **YOU** ALLOWED THAT ACCURSED PUPPET TO BE SMASHED! IT WAS THE ONE EVENTUALITY I DID NOT FORESEE!
WE WERE SO CLOSE TO VICTORY!! SO CLOSE--!!


LOOK! THEY HAD AN ESCAPE PLANE HIDDEN IN A CONCEALED CAVE!
BAH! WE HAVE ONLY LOST ONE BATTLE! I NEVER MAKE THE SAME MISTAKE TWICE! NEXT TIME, MY PLAN WILL BE FLAWLESS!
I DISLIKE BEING THE BEARER OF BAD NEWS, BUT I MUST RUEFULLY ADMIT THAT MY QUARRY ELUDED ME!
WE KNOW IT, BEAST! WE JUST SAW THEM TAKE OFF!
THEY WON'T ESCAPE! WE'LL FIND THEM SOONER OR LATER!
MR. FANTASTIC, WE HOPE YOU'LL ACCEPT OUR SINCERE APOLOGIES FOR WHAT HAPPENED! WE WERE MERELY FOLLOWING ORDERS-- WE DIDN'T DREAM THE EVIL PUPPET MASTER WAS BEHIND THOSE ORDERS!
NO APOLOGY NEEDED, SON! YOU WERE VALIANT FOES--AND EQUALLY VALIANT ALLIES! WE'RE PROUD TO HAVE MET YOU!
KNOCK IT OFF, REED, BEFORE I START BAWLIN'!
YOUR ORDEAL IS ENDED, MY X-MEN! RETURN TO ME NOW!
THAT'S THE PROF! LET'S GO, GUYS!
THEY'RE A WONDERFUL GROUP! MAKES YOU PROUD OF THE YOUNGSTERS OF TODAY!!
I WONDER WHO THEY REALLY ARE?
REFUGEES FROM A FREAK SHOW, IF YA ASK ME!
IF THE ANDROID WAS BEATEN THE WAY I SUSPECT HE WAS, THE LEADER OF THE X-MEN IS FAR WISER THAN ANYONE DREAMS!!
IT'S STRANGE, REED! YOU ORIGINALLY MADE THE ANDROID TO HELP MANKIND--BUT THE MAD THINKER TURNED IT INTO A MENACE!
THAT'S THE IRONY OF SCIENCE, JOHNNY! NO INVENTION IS GOOD OR BAD OF ITSELF! IT'S ONLY THE USE TO WHICH MANKIND PUTS IT THAT REALLY MATTERS!
I WONDER IF WE'LL EVER MEET THE X-MEN AGAIN?
ONE THING'S CERTAIN-- YOU SURE COULDN'T MISS 'EM IN A CROWD!
THEY WEREN'T TOO BAD FOR AMATEURS!! 'CEPT FOR THE BEAST--HE'S TOO UGLY!
THE END
NATURALLY, IF YOU WANT TO SEE MORE OF THE X-MEN, WE WON'T OBJECT! THEY'RE ON SALE NOW! AS FOR THE TOP-RANKING F.F., ISH #29 MAY WELL GO DOWN IN HISTORY AS--OOPS! WE'RE OUT OF ROOM! BUY IT AND SEE FOR YOURSELF!

THE WORLD'S GREATEST COMIC MAGAZINE!
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE AUTHORITY
Fantastic Four
MARVEL COMICS GROUP 12¢
IND.
29
AUG.
IT STARTED ON
YANCY STREET

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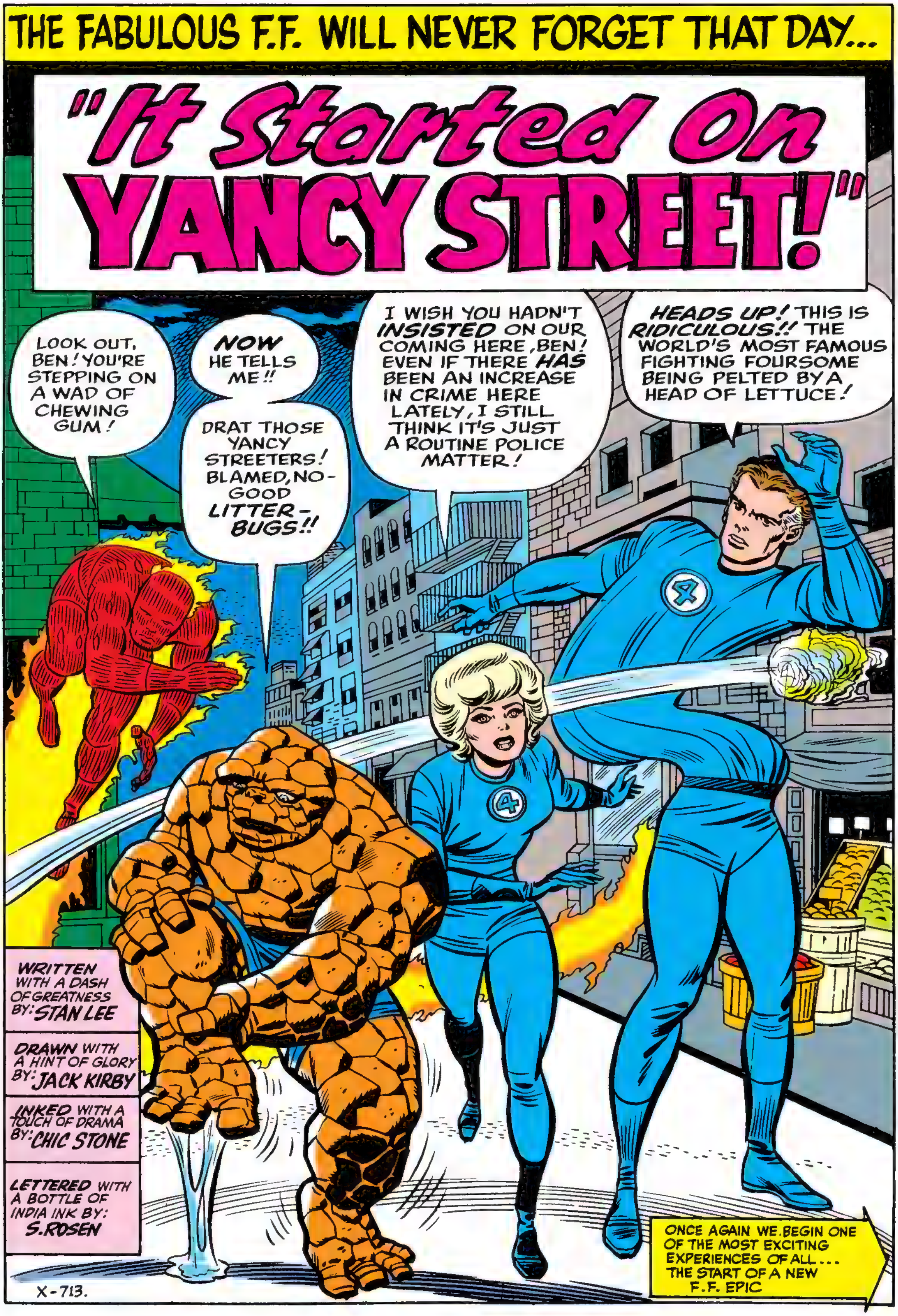
THE FABULOUS F.F. WILL NEVER FORGET THAT DAY...
"It Started On YANCY STREET!"
LOOK OUT, BEN! YOU'RE STEPPING ON A WAD OF CHEWING GUM!
NOW HE TELLS ME!!
DRAT THOSE YANCY STREETERS! BLAMED, NO-GOOD LITTER-BUGS!!
I WISH YOU HADN'T INSISTED ON OUR COMING HERE, BEN! EVEN IF THERE HAS BEEN AN INCREASE IN CRIME HERE LATELY, I STILL THINK IT'S JUST A ROUTINE POLICE MATTER!
HEADS UP! THIS IS RIDICULOUS!! THE WORLD'S MOST FAMOUS FIGHTING FOURSOME BEING PELTED BY A HEAD OF LETTUCE!
WRITTEN WITH A DASH OF GREATNESS BY: STAN LEE
DRAWN WITH A HINT OF GLORY BY: JACK KIRBY
INKED WITH A TOUCH OF DRAMA BY: CHIC STONE
LETTERED WITH A BOTTLE OF INDIA INK BY: S. ROSEN
ONCE AGAIN WE BEGIN ONE OF THE MOST EXCITING EXPERIENCES OF ALL... THE START OF A NEW F.F. EPIC
X-713.

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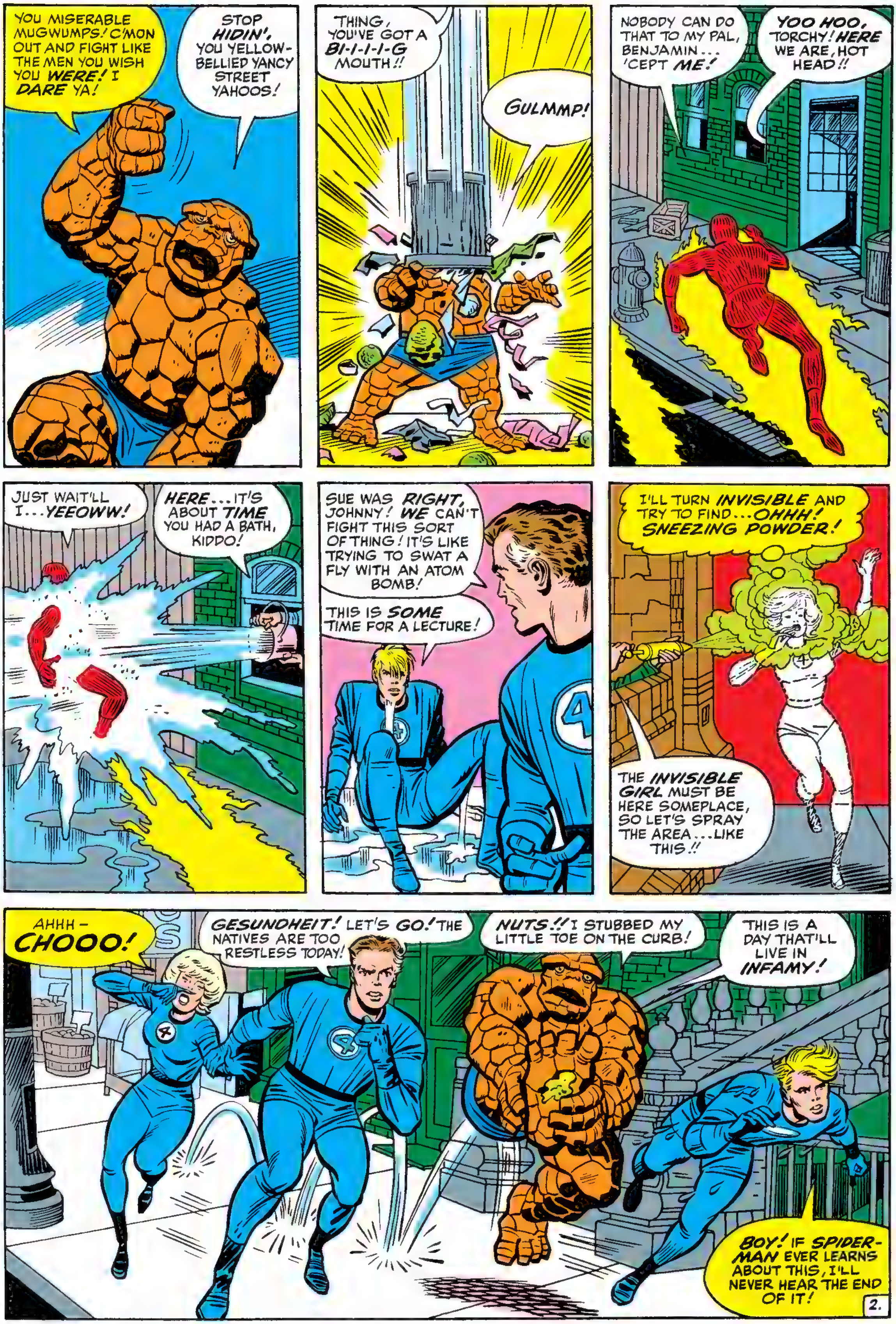
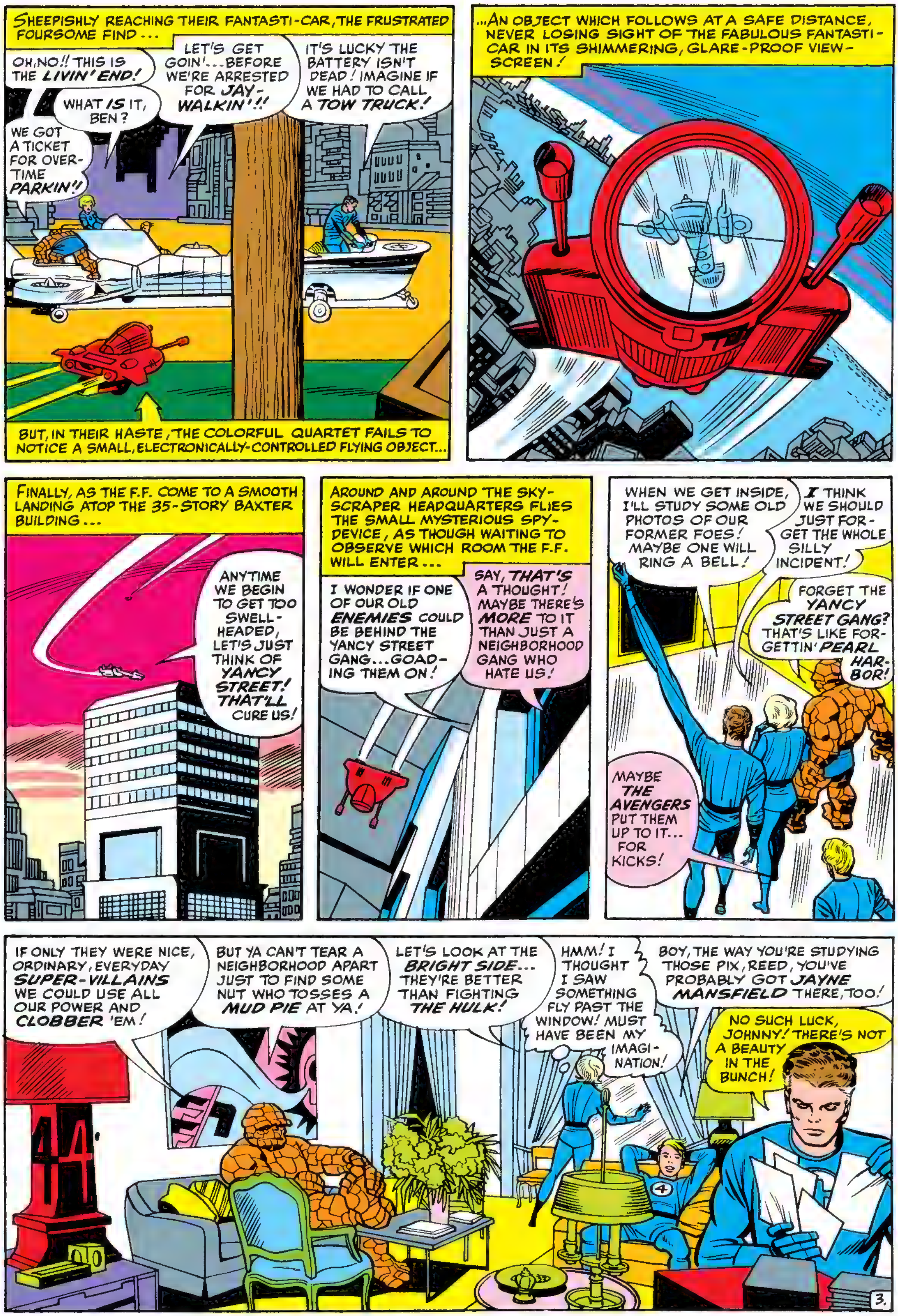
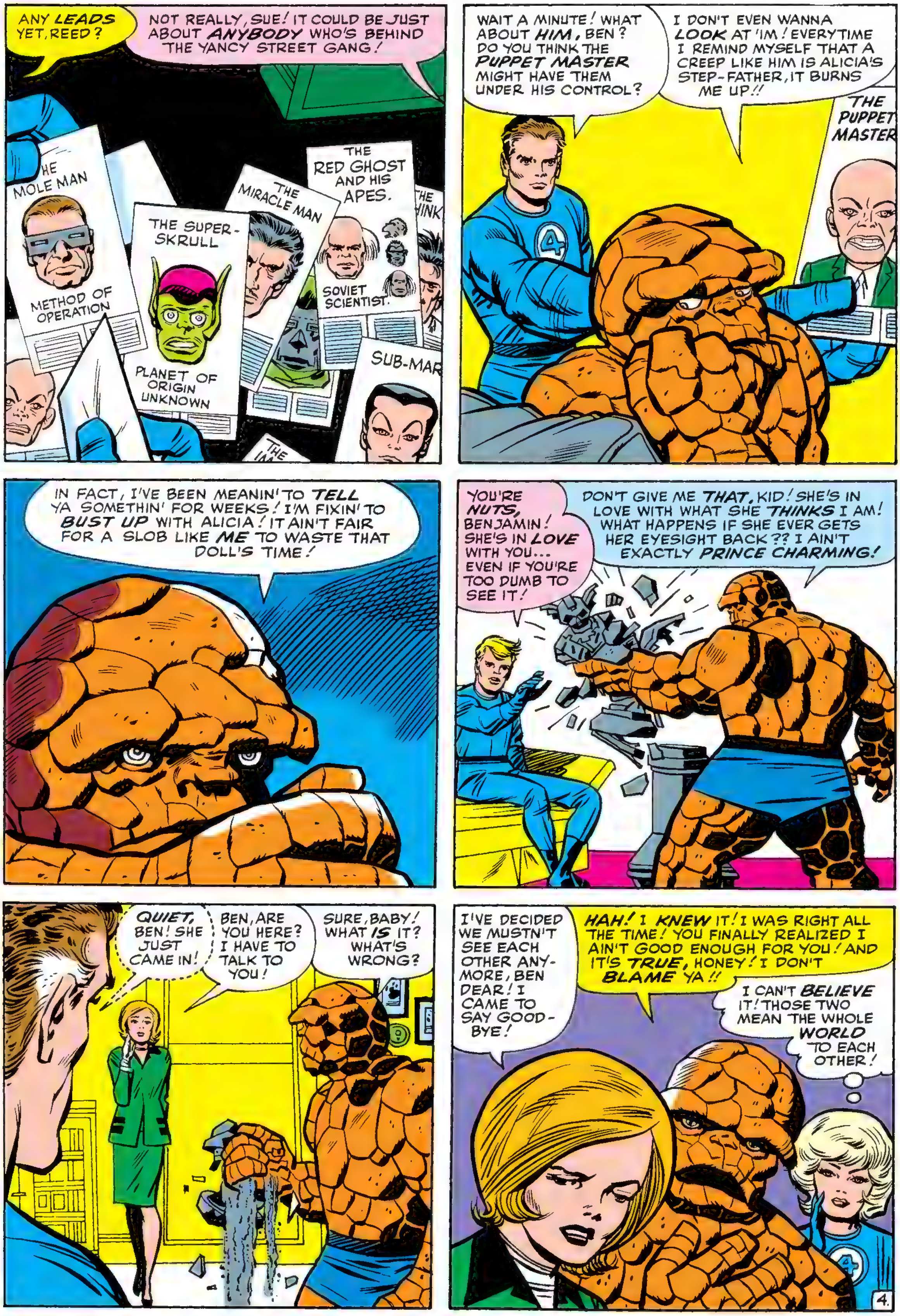
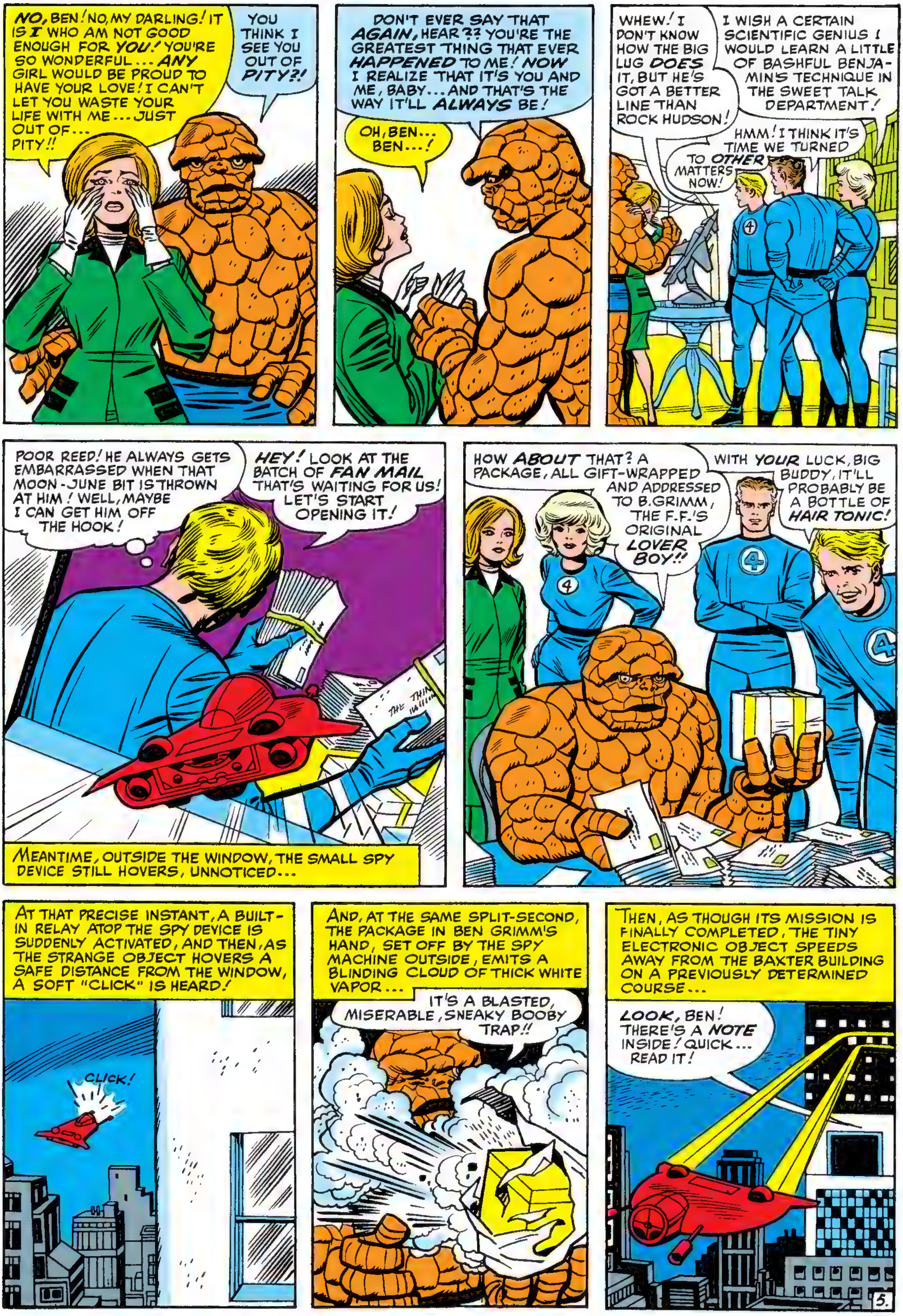
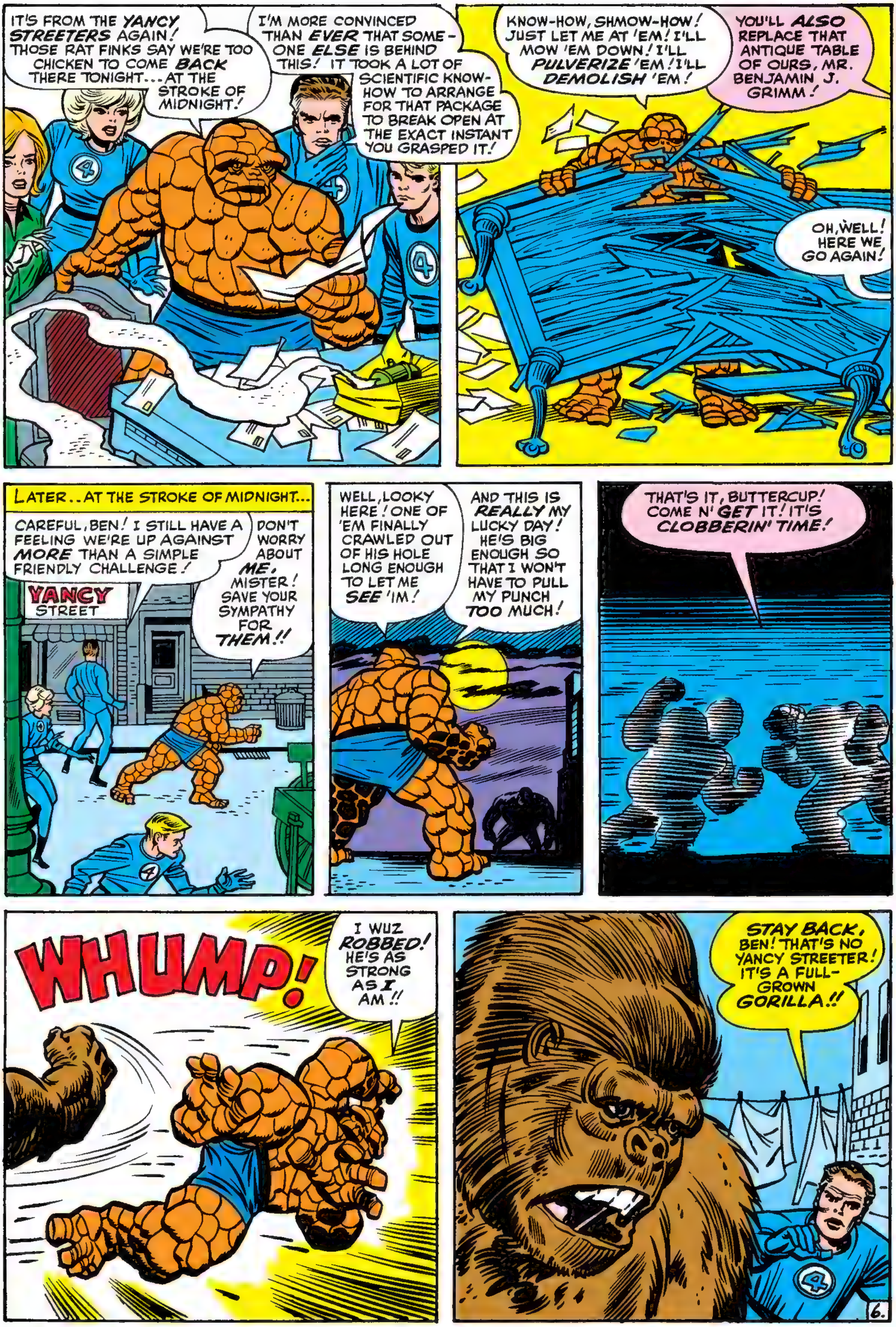
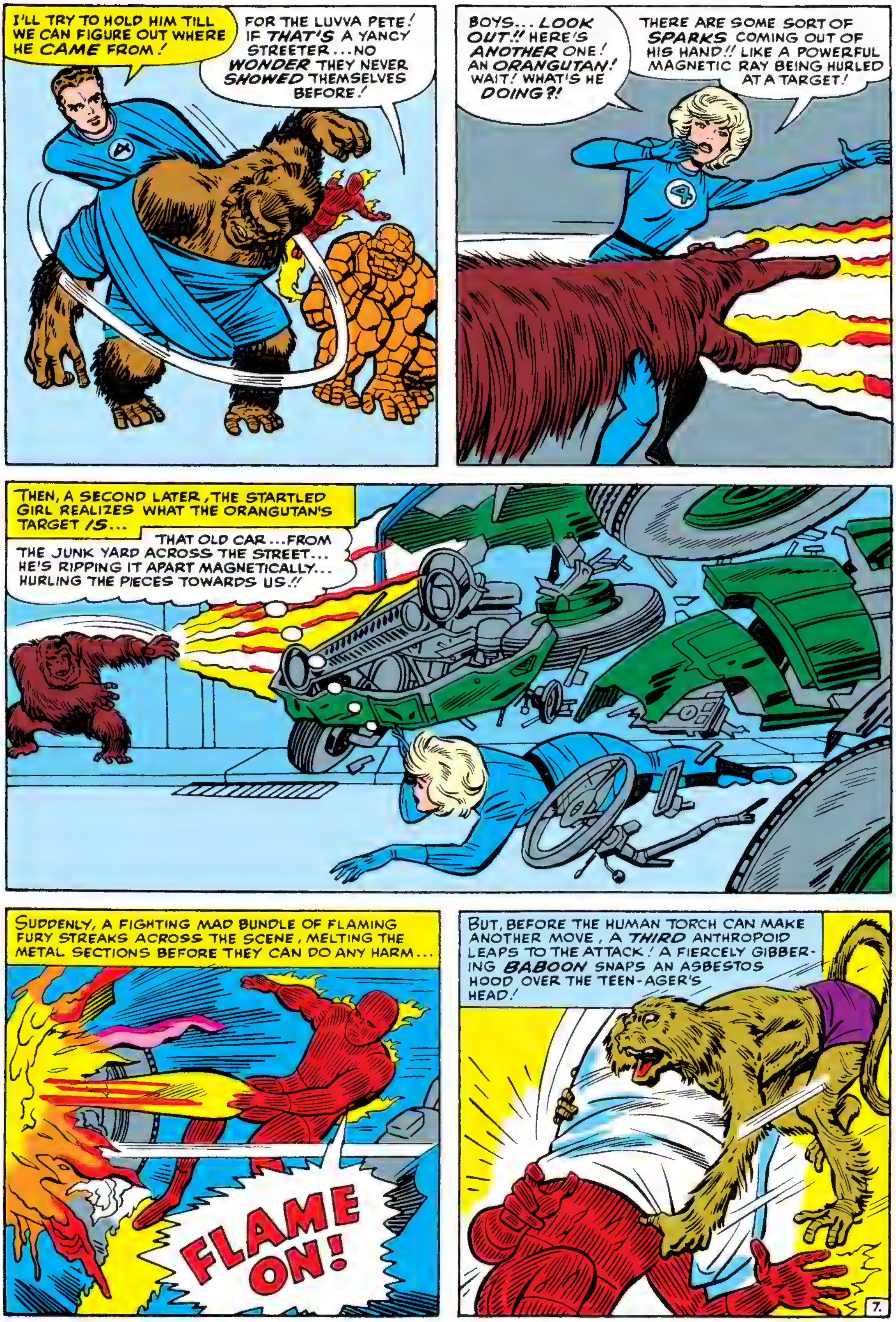

YOU MISERABLE MUGWUMPS! C'MON OUT AND FIGHT LIKE THE MEN YOU WISH YOU **WERE!** I **DARE** YA!
STOP **HIDIN'**, YOU YELLOW-BELLIED YANCY STREET YAHOOS!
THING, YOU'VE GOT A **BI-I-I-I-G** MOUTH!!
GULMMP!
NOBODY CAN DO THAT TO MY PAL, BENJAMIN... 'CEPT **ME!**
YOO HOO, TORCHY! **HERE** WE ARE, HOT HEAD!!
JUST WAIT'LL I... **YEEOWW!**
HERE... IT'S ABOUT **TIME** YOU HAD A BATH, KIDDO!
SUE WAS **RIGHT,** JOHNNY! **WE** CAN'T FIGHT THIS SORT OF THING! IT'S LIKE TRYING TO SWAT A FLY WITH AN ATOM BOMB!
THIS IS **SOME** TIME FOR A LECTURE!
I'LL TURN **INVISIBLE** AND TRY TO FIND... **OHHH! SNEEZING POWDER!**
THE **INVISIBLE GIRL** MUST BE HERE SOMEPLACE, SO LET'S SPRAY THE AREA... LIKE THIS!!
AHHH- **CHOOO!**
GESUNDHEIT! LET'S **GO!** THE NATIVES ARE TOO RESTLESS TODAY!
NUTS!! I STUBBED MY LITTLE TOE ON THE CURB!
THIS IS A DAY THAT'LL LIVE IN **INFAMY!**
BOY! IF **SPIDER-MAN** EVER LEARNS ABOUT THIS, I'LL NEVER HEAR THE END OF IT!
2.

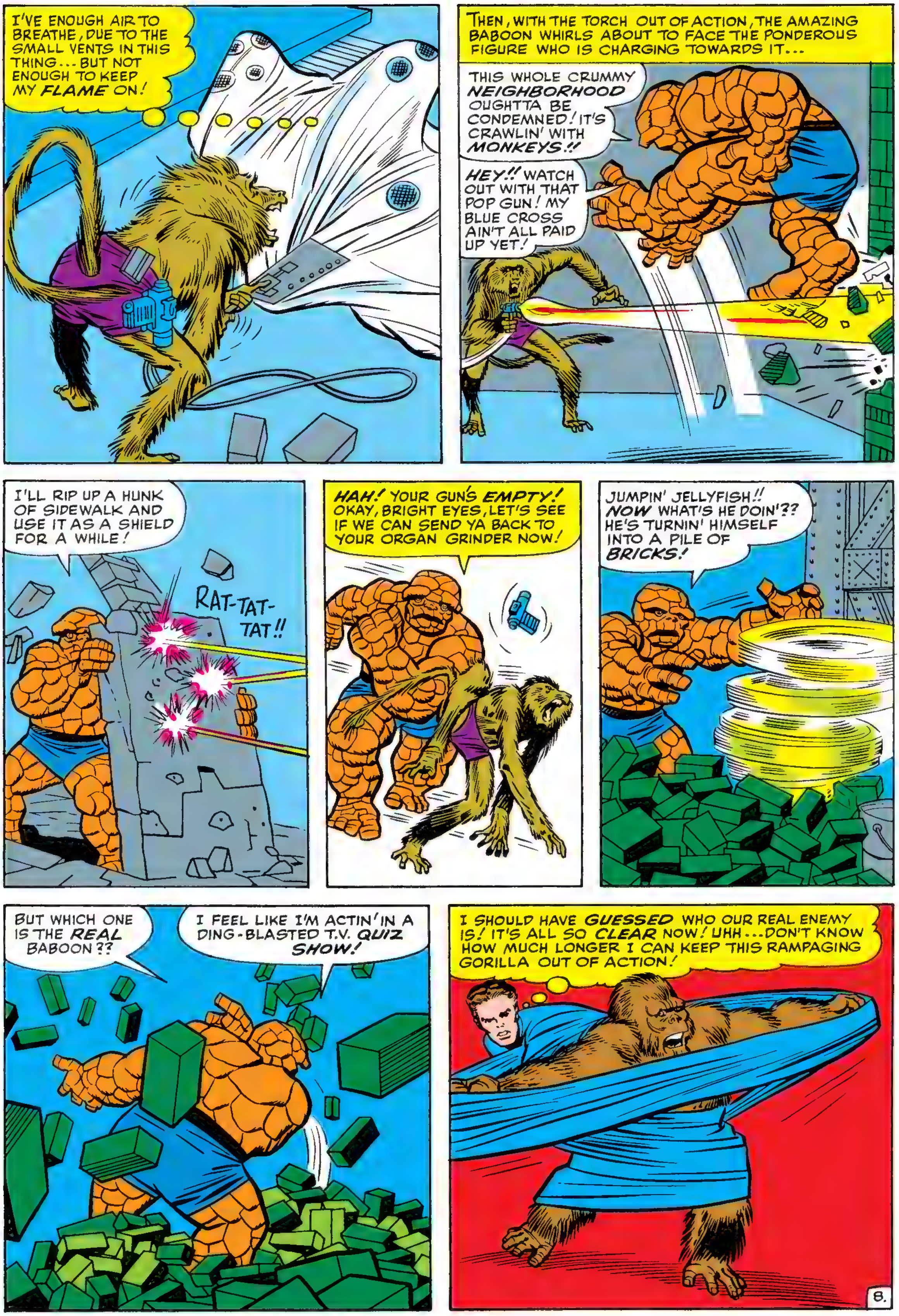

SHEEPISHLY REACHING THEIR FANTASTI-CAR, THE FRUSTRATED FOURSOME FIND...
OH, NO!! THIS IS THE LIVIN' END!
WHAT IS IT, BEN?
WE GOT A TICKET FOR OVER-TIME PARKIN'!!
LET'S GET GOIN'...BEFORE WE'RE ARRESTED FOR JAY-WALKIN'!!
IT'S LUCKY THE BATTERY ISN'T DEAD! IMAGINE IF WE HAD TO CALL A TOW TRUCK!
BUT, IN THEIR HASTE, THE COLORFUL QUARTET FAILS TO NOTICE A SMALL, ELECTRONICALLY-CONTROLLED FLYING OBJECT...
...AN OBJECT WHICH FOLLOWS AT A SAFE DISTANCE, NEVER LOSING SIGHT OF THE FABULOUS FANTASTI-CAR IN ITS SHIMMERING, GLARE-PROOF VIEW-SCREEN!
FINALLY, AS THE F.F. COME TO A SMOOTH LANDING ATOP THE 35-STORY BAXTER BUILDING...
ANYTIME WE BEGIN TO GET TOO SWELL-HEADED, LET'S JUST THINK OF YANCY STREET! THAT'LL CURE US!
AROUND AND AROUND THE SKY-SCRAPER HEADQUARTERS FLIES THE SMALL MYSTERIOUS SPY-DEVICE, AS THOUGH WAITING TO OBSERVE WHICH ROOM THE F.F. WILL ENTER...
I WONDER IF ONE OF OUR OLD ENEMIES COULD BE BEHIND THE YANCY STREET GANG...GOADING THEM ON!
SAY, THAT'S A THOUGHT! MAYBE THERE'S MORE TO IT THAN JUST A NEIGHBORHOOD GANG WHO HATE US!
WHEN WE GET INSIDE, I'LL STUDY SOME OLD PHOTOS OF OUR FORMER FOES! MAYBE ONE WILL RING A BELL!
I THINK WE SHOULD JUST FOR-GET THE WHOLE SILLY INCIDENT!
FORGET THE YANCY STREET GANG? THAT'S LIKE FOR-GETTIN' PEARL HAR-BOR!
MAYBE THE AVENGERS PUT THEM UP TO IT...FOR KICKS!
IF ONLY THEY WERE NICE, ORDINARY, EVERYDAY SUPER-VILLAINS WE COULD USE ALL OUR POWER AND CLOBBER 'EM!
BUT YA CAN'T TEAR A NEIGHBORHOOD APART JUST TO FIND SOME NUT WHO TOSSES A MUD PIE AT YA!
LET'S LOOK AT THE BRIGHT SIDE...THEY'RE BETTER THAN FIGHTING THE HULK!
HMM! I THOUGHT I SAW SOMETHING FLY PAST THE WINDOW! MUST HAVE BEEN MY IMAGI-NATION!
BOY, THE WAY YOU'RE STUDYING THOSE PIX, REED, YOU'VE PROBABLY GOT JAYNE MANSFIELD THERE, TOO!
NO SUCH LUCK, JOHNNY! THERE'S NOT A BEAUTY IN THE BUNCH!
4

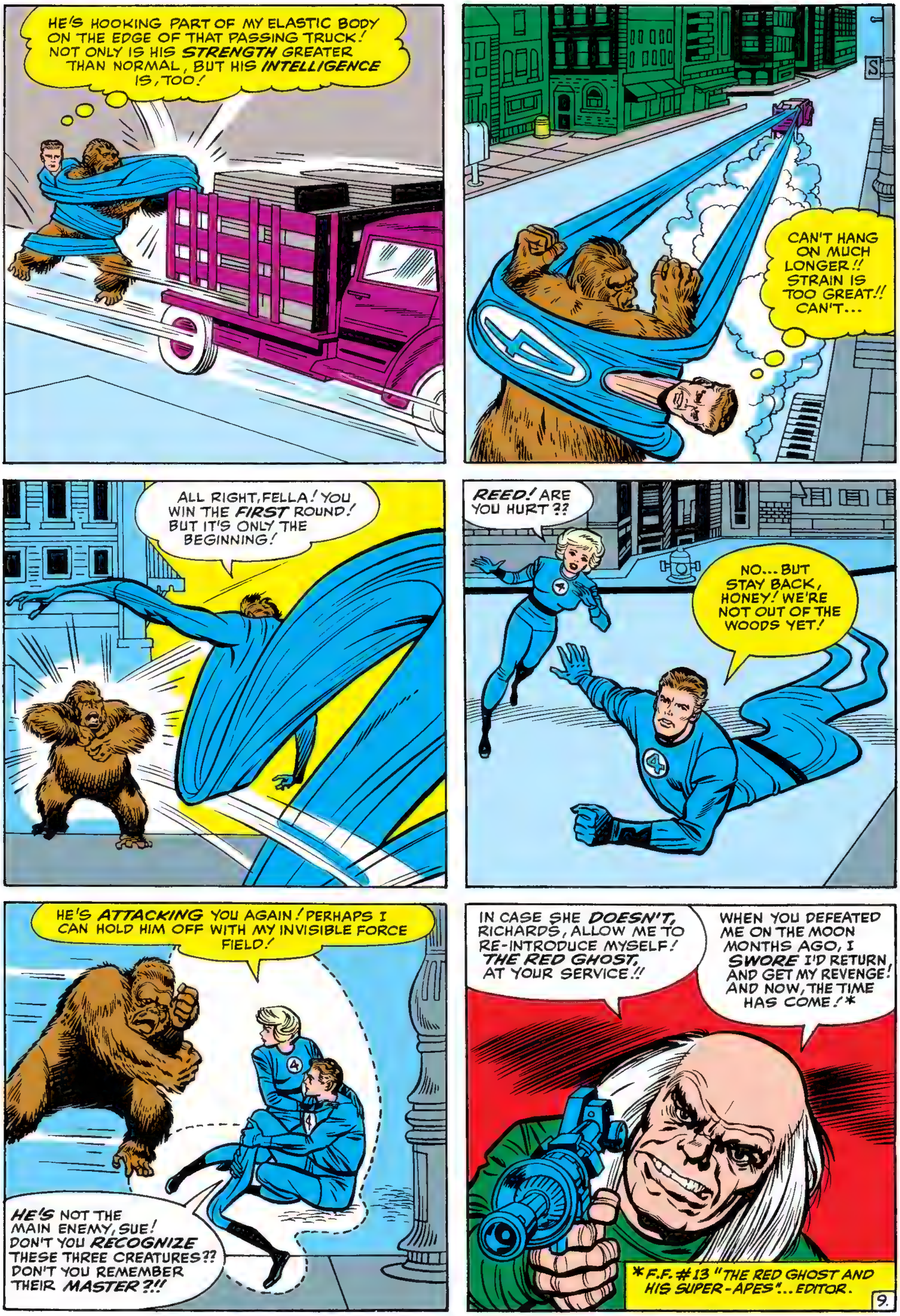

ANY LEADS YET, REED?
NOT REALLY, SUE! IT COULD BE JUST ABOUT ANYBODY WHO'S BEHIND THE YANCY STREET GANG!
HE MOLE MAN
METHOD OF OPERATION
THE SUPER-SKRULL
PLANET OF ORIGIN UNKNOWN
THE MIRACLE MAN
THE RED GHOST AND HIS APES.
SOVIET SCIENTIST.
HE HINK
SUB-MAR
THE IM
WAIT A MINUTE! WHAT ABOUT HIM, BEN? DO YOU THINK THE PUPPET MASTER MIGHT HAVE THEM UNDER HIS CONTROL?
I DON'T EVEN WANNA LOOK AT 'IM! EVERYTIME I REMIND MYSELF THAT A CREEP LIKE HIM IS ALICIA'S STEP-FATHER, IT BURNS ME UP!!
THE PUPPET MASTER
IN FACT, I'VE BEEN MEANIN' TO TELL YA SOMETHIN' FOR WEEKS! I'M FIXIN' TO BUST UP WITH ALICIA! IT AIN'T FAIR FOR A SLOB LIKE ME TO WASTE THAT DOLL'S TIME!
YOU'RE NUTS, BENJAMIN! SHE'S IN LOVE WITH YOU... EVEN IF YOU'RE TOO DUMB TO SEE IT!
DON'T GIVE ME THAT, KID! SHE'S IN LOVE WITH WHAT SHE THINKS I AM! WHAT HAPPENS IF SHE EVER GETS HER EYESIGHT BACK?? I AIN'T EXACTLY PRINCE CHARMING!
QUIET, BEN! SHE JUST CAME IN!
BEN, ARE YOU HERE? I HAVE TO TALK TO YOU!
SURE, BABY! WHAT IS IT? WHAT'S WRONG?
I'VE DECIDED WE MUSTN'T SEE EACH OTHER ANYMORE, BEN DEAR! I CAME TO SAY GOOD-BYE!
HAH! I KNEW IT! I WAS RIGHT ALL THE TIME! YOU FINALLY REALIZED I AIN'T GOOD ENOUGH FOR YOU! AND IT'S TRUE, HONEY! I DON'T BLAME YA!!
I CAN'T BELIEVE IT! THOSE TWO MEAN THE WHOLE WORLD TO EACH OTHER!

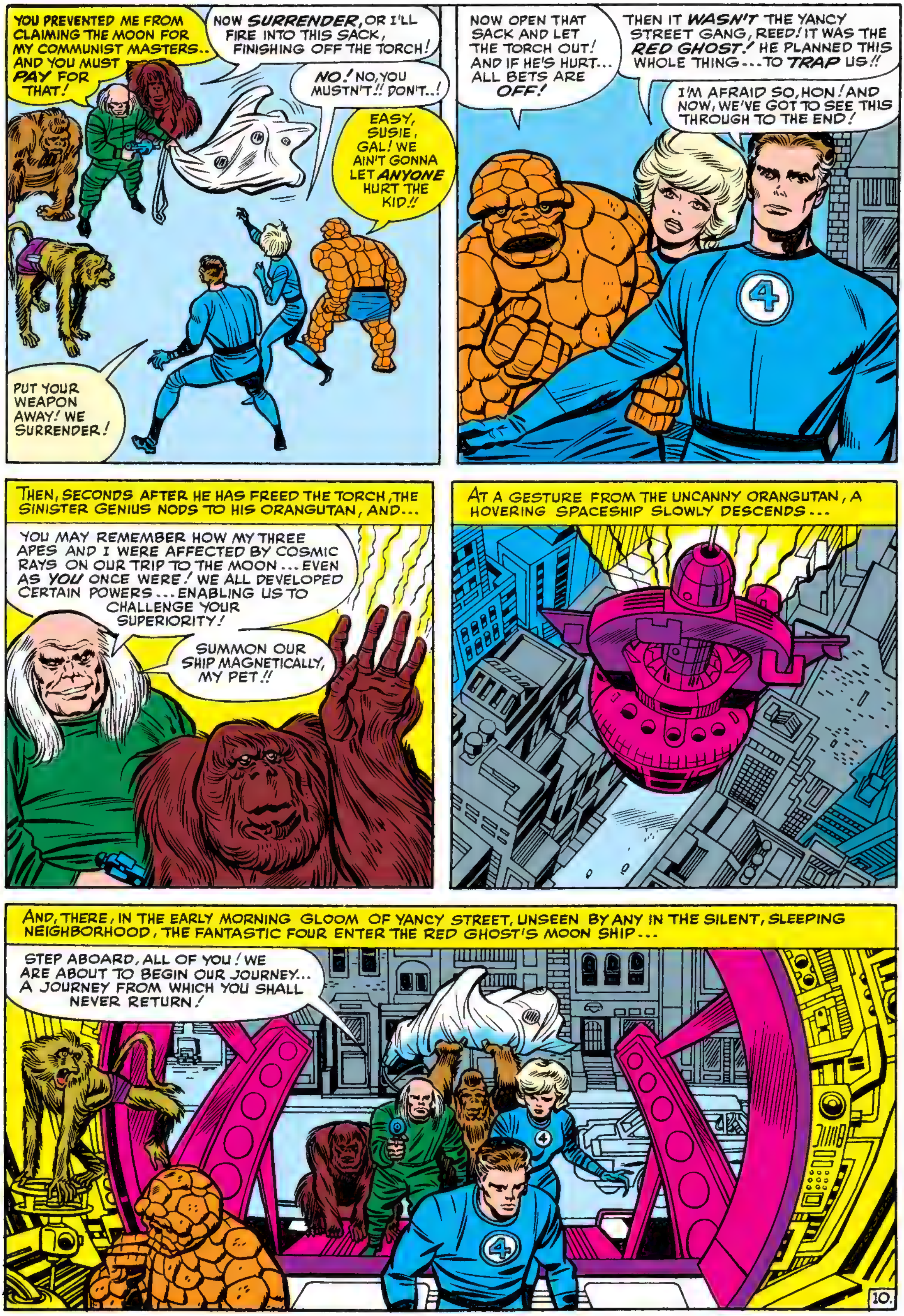

NO, BEN! NO, MY DARLING! IT IS I WHO AM NOT GOOD ENOUGH FOR YOU! YOU'RE SO WONDERFUL... ANY GIRL WOULD BE PROUD TO HAVE YOUR LOVE! I CAN'T LET YOU WASTE YOUR LIFE WITH ME... JUST OUT OF... PITY!!
YOU THINK I SEE YOU OUT OF PITY?!
DON'T EVER SAY THAT AGAIN, HEAR?? YOU'RE THE GREATEST THING THAT EVER HAPPENED TO ME! NOW I REALIZE THAT IT'S YOU AND ME, BABY... AND THAT'S THE WAY IT'LL ALWAYS BE!
OH, BEN... BEN...!
WHEW! I DON'T KNOW HOW THE BIG LUG DOES IT, BUT HE'S GOT A BETTER LINE THAN ROCK HUDSON!
I WISH A CERTAIN SCIENTIFIC GENIUS I WOULD LEARN A LITTLE OF BASHFUL BENJAMIN'S TECHNIQUE IN THE SWEET TALK DEPARTMENT!
HMM! I THINK IT'S TIME WE TURNED TO OTHER MATTERS NOW!
POOR REED! HE ALWAYS GETS EMBARRASSED WHEN THAT MOON-JUNE BIT IS THROWN AT HIM! WELL, MAYBE I CAN GET HIM OFF THE HOOK!
HEY! LOOK AT THE BATCH OF FAN MAIL THAT'S WAITING FOR US! LET'S START OPENING IT!
MEANTIME, OUTSIDE THE WINDOW, THE SMALL SPY DEVICE STILL HOVERS, UNNOTICED...
HOW ABOUT THAT? A PACKAGE, ALL GIFT-WRAPPED AND ADDRESSED TO B. GRIMM, THE F.F.'S ORIGINAL LOVER BOY!!
WITH YOUR LUCK, BIG BUDDY, IT'LL PROBABLY BE A BOTTLE OF HAIR TONIC!
AT THAT PRECISE INSTANT, A BUILT-IN RELAY ATOP THE SPY DEVICE IS SUDDENLY ACTIVATED, AND THEN, AS THE STRANGE OBJECT HOVERS A SAFE DISTANCE FROM THE WINDOW, A SOFT "CLICK" IS HEARD!
CLICK!
AND, AT THE SAME SPLIT-SECOND, THE PACKAGE IN BEN GRIMM'S HAND, SET OFF BY THE SPY MACHINE OUTSIDE, EMITS A BLINDING CLOUD OF THICK WHITE VAPOR...
IT'S A BLASTED, MISERABLE, SNEAKY BOOBY TRAP!!
THEN, AS THOUGH ITS MISSION IS FINALLY COMPLETED, THE TINY ELECTRONIC OBJECT SPEEDS AWAY FROM THE BAXTER BUILDING ON A PREVIOUSLY DETERMINED COURSE...
LOOK, BEN! THERE'S A NOTE INSIDE! QUICK... READ IT!

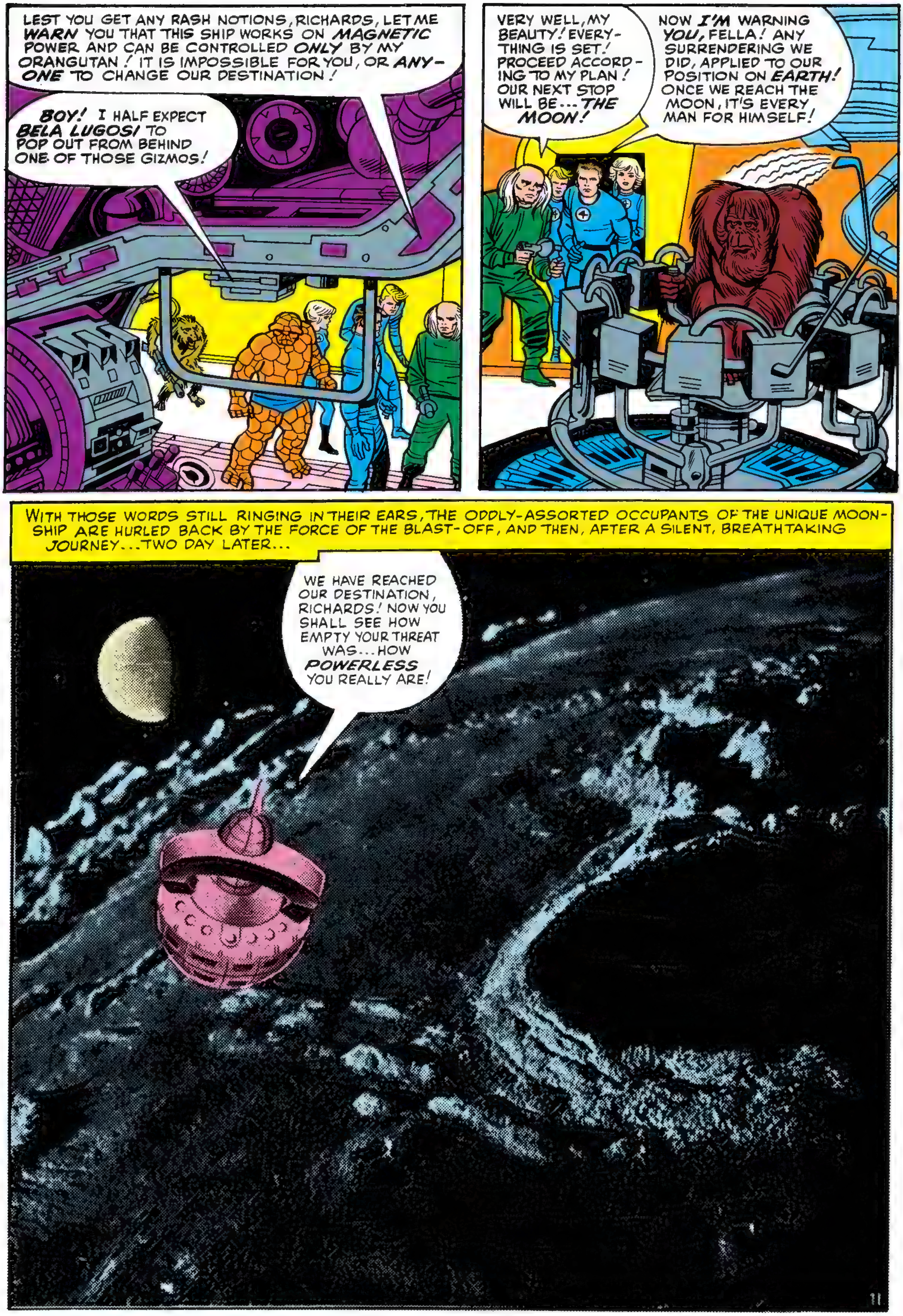

IT'S FROM THE YANCY STREETERS AGAIN! THOSE RAT FINKS SAY WE'RE TOO CHICKEN TO COME BACK THERE TONIGHT... AT THE STROKE OF MIDNIGHT!
I'M MORE CONVINCED THAN EVER THAT SOMEONE ELSE IS BEHIND THIS! IT TOOK A LOT OF SCIENTIFIC KNOW-HOW TO ARRANGE FOR THAT PACKAGE TO BREAK OPEN AT THE EXACT INSTANT YOU GRASPED IT!
KNOW-HOW, SHMOW-HOW! JUST LET ME AT 'EM! I'LL MOW 'EM DOWN! I'LL PULVERIZE 'EM! I'LL DEMOLISH 'EM!
YOU'LL ALSO REPLACE THAT ANTIQUE TABLE OF OURS, MR. BENJAMIN J. GRIMM!
OH, WELL! HERE WE GO AGAIN!
LATER.. AT THE STROKE OF MIDNIGHT...
CAREFUL, BEN! I STILL HAVE A FEELING WE'RE UP AGAINST MORE THAN A SIMPLE FRIENDLY CHALLENGE!
DON'T WORRY ABOUT ME, MISTER! SAVE YOUR SYMPATHY FOR THEM!!
YANCY STREET
WELL, LOOKY HERE! ONE OF 'EM FINALLY CRAWLED OUT OF HIS HOLE LONG ENOUGH TO LET ME SEE 'IM!
AND THIS IS REALLY MY LUCKY DAY! HE'S BIG ENOUGH SO THAT I WON'T HAVE TO PULL MY PUNCH TOO MUCH!
THAT'S IT, BUTTERCUP! COME N' GET IT! IT'S CLOBBERIN' TIME!
WHUMP!
I WUZ ROBBED! HE'S AS STRONG AS I AM!!
STAY BACK, BEN! THAT'S NO YANCY STREETER! IT'S A FULL-GROWN GORILLA!!

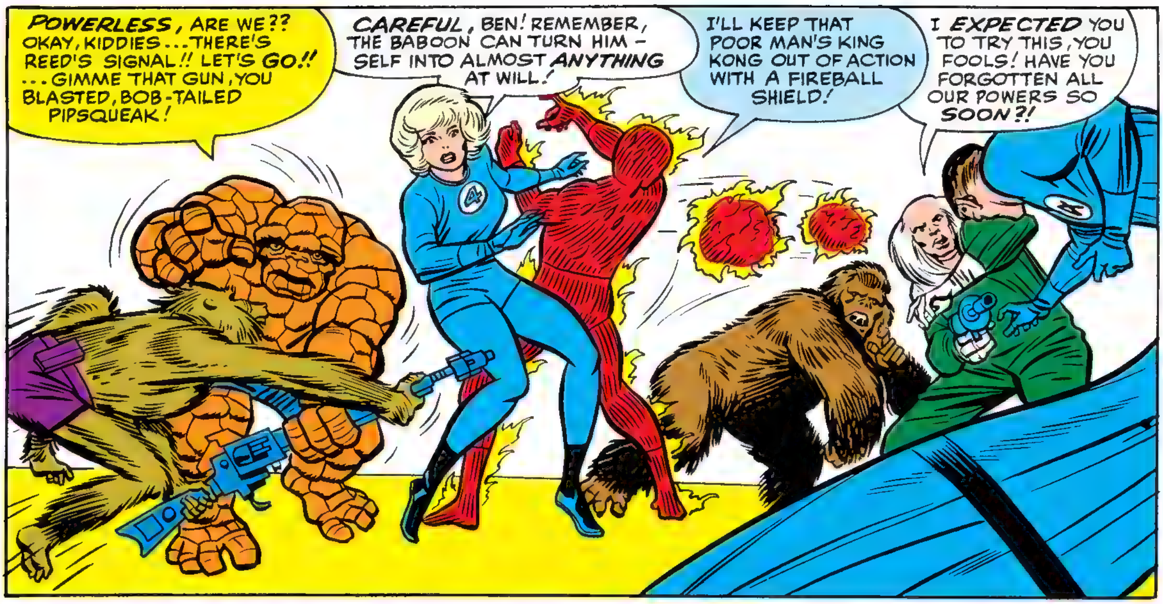

I'LL TRY TO HOLD HIM TILL WE CAN FIGURE OUT WHERE HE *CAME* FROM!
FOR THE LUVVA PETE! IF *THAT'S* A YANCY STREETER...NO *WONDER* THEY NEVER *SHOWED* THEMSELVES BEFORE!
BOYS... *LOOK OUT!!* HERE'S *ANOTHER* ONE! AN *ORANGUTAN!* WAIT! WHAT'S HE *DOING?!*
THERE ARE SOME SORT OF *SPARKS* COMING OUT OF HIS HAND!! LIKE A POWERFUL MAGNETIC RAY BEING HURLED AT A TARGET!
THEN, A SECOND LATER, THE STARTLED GIRL REALIZES WHAT THE ORANGUTAN'S TARGET *IS*...
THAT OLD CAR...FROM THE JUNK YARD ACROSS THE STREET... HE'S RIPPING IT APART MAGNETICALLY... HURLING THE PIECES TOWARDS US!!
SUDDENLY, A FIGHTING MAD BUNDLE OF FLAMING FURY STREAKS ACROSS THE SCENE, MELTING THE METAL SECTIONS BEFORE THEY CAN DO ANY HARM...
FLAME ON!
BUT, BEFORE THE HUMAN TORCH CAN MAKE ANOTHER MOVE, A *THIRD* ANTHROPOID LEAPS TO THE ATTACK! A FIERCELY GIBBERING *BABOON* SNAPS AN ASBESTOS HOOD OVER THE TEEN-AGER'S HEAD!

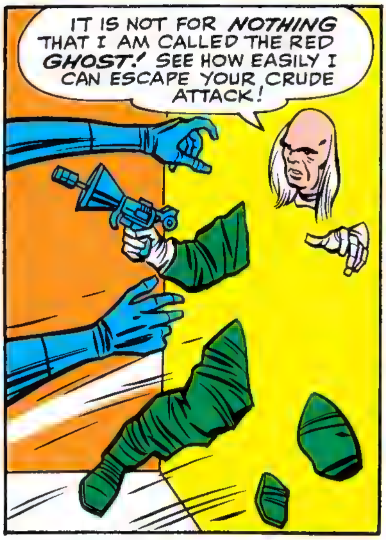

I'VE ENOUGH AIR TO BREATHE, DUE TO THE SMALL VENTS IN THIS THING... BUT NOT ENOUGH TO KEEP MY ***FLAME*** ON!
THEN, WITH THE TORCH OUT OF ACTION, THE AMAZING BABOON WHIRLS ABOUT TO FACE THE PONDEROUS FIGURE WHO IS CHARGING TOWARDS IT...
THIS WHOLE CRUMMY ***NEIGHBORHOOD*** OUGHTTA BE CONDEMNED! IT'S CRAWLIN' WITH ***MONKEYS!!***
HEY!! WATCH OUT WITH THAT POP GUN! MY BLUE CROSS AIN'T ALL PAID UP YET!
I'LL RIP UP A HUNK OF SIDEWALK AND USE IT AS A SHIELD FOR A WHILE!
RAT-TAT-TAT!!
HAH! YOUR GUN'S ***EMPTY!*** OKAY, BRIGHT EYES, LET'S SEE IF WE CAN SEND YA BACK TO YOUR ORGAN GRINDER NOW!
JUMPIN' JELLYFISH!! ***NOW*** WHAT'S HE DOIN'?? HE'S TURNIN' HIMSELF INTO A PILE OF ***BRICKS!***
BUT WHICH ONE IS THE ***REAL*** BABOON??
I FEEL LIKE I'M ACTIN' IN A DING-BLASTED T.V. ***QUIZ SHOW!***
I SHOULD HAVE ***GUESSED*** WHO OUR REAL ENEMY IS! IT'S ALL SO ***CLEAR*** NOW! UHH... DON'T KNOW HOW MUCH LONGER I CAN KEEP THIS RAMPAGING GORILLA OUT OF ACTION!

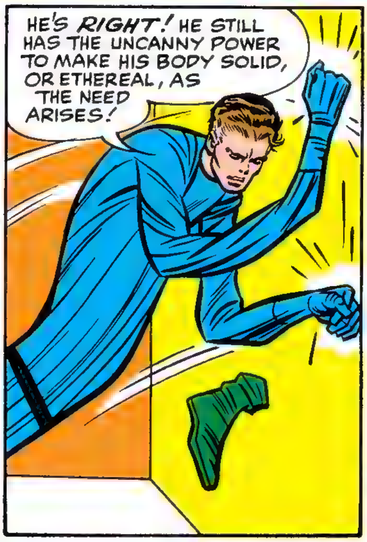

HE'S HOOKING PART OF MY ELASTIC BODY ON THE EDGE OF THAT PASSING TRUCK! NOT ONLY IS HIS *STRENGTH* GREATER THAN NORMAL, BUT HIS *INTELLIGENCE* IS, TOO!
CAN'T HANG ON MUCH LONGER!! STRAIN IS TOO GREAT!! CAN'T...
ALL RIGHT, FELLA! YOU WIN THE *FIRST* ROUND! BUT IT'S ONLY THE BEGINNING!
REED! ARE YOU HURT??
NO... BUT STAY BACK, HONEY! WE'RE NOT OUT OF THE WOODS YET!
HE'S *ATTACKING* YOU AGAIN! PERHAPS I CAN HOLD HIM OFF WITH MY INVISIBLE FORCE FIELD!
HE'S NOT THE MAIN ENEMY, SUE! DON'T YOU *RECOGNIZE* THESE THREE CREATURES?? DON'T YOU REMEMBER THEIR *MASTER*?!!
IN CASE SHE *DOESN'T*, RICHARDS, ALLOW ME TO RE-INTRODUCE MYSELF! *THE RED GHOST*, AT YOUR SERVICE!!
WHEN YOU DEFEATED ME ON THE MOON MONTHS AGO, I *SWORE* I'D RETURN AND GET MY REVENGE! AND NOW, THE TIME HAS COME!*
*F.F. #13 "THE RED GHOST AND HIS SUPER-APES"... EDITOR.
9.

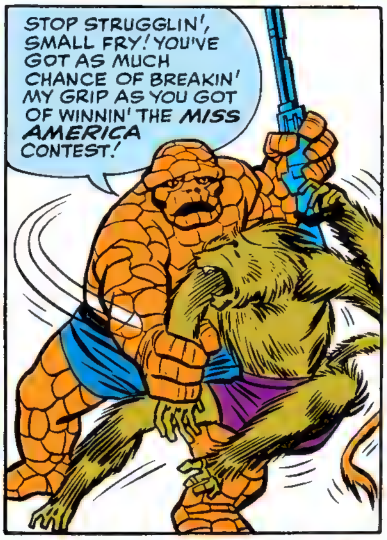

YOU PREVENTED ME FROM CLAIMING THE MOON FOR MY COMMUNIST MASTERS.. AND YOU MUST PAY FOR THAT!
NOW SURRENDER, OR I'LL FIRE INTO THIS SACK, FINISHING OFF THE TORCH!
NO! NO, YOU MUSTN'T!! DON'T..!
EASY, SUSIE, GAL! WE AIN'T GONNA LET ANYONE HURT THE KID!!
PUT YOUR WEAPON AWAY! WE SURRENDER!
NOW OPEN THAT SACK AND LET THE TORCH OUT! AND IF HE'S HURT... ALL BETS ARE OFF!
THEN IT WASN'T THE YANCY STREET GANG, REED! IT WAS THE RED GHOST! HE PLANNED THIS WHOLE THING...TO TRAP US!!
I'M AFRAID SO, HON! AND NOW, WE'VE GOT TO SEE THIS THROUGH TO THE END!
THEN, SECONDS AFTER HE HAS FREED THE TORCH, THE SINISTER GENIUS NODS TO HIS ORANGUTAN, AND...
YOU MAY REMEMBER HOW MY THREE APES AND I WERE AFFECTED BY COSMIC RAYS ON OUR TRIP TO THE MOON... EVEN AS YOU ONCE WERE! WE ALL DEVELOPED CERTAIN POWERS...ENABLING US TO CHALLENGE YOUR SUPERIORITY!
SUMMON OUR SHIP MAGNETICALLY, MY PET!!
AT A GESTURE FROM THE UNCANNY ORANGUTAN, A HOVERING SPACESHIP SLOWLY DESCENDS...
AND, THERE, IN THE EARLY MORNING GLOOM OF YANCY STREET, UNSEEN BY ANY IN THE SILENT, SLEEPING NEIGHBORHOOD, THE FANTASTIC FOUR ENTER THE RED GHOST'S MOON SHIP...
STEP ABOARD, ALL OF YOU! WE ARE ABOUT TO BEGIN OUR JOURNEY... A JOURNEY FROM WHICH YOU SHALL NEVER RETURN!

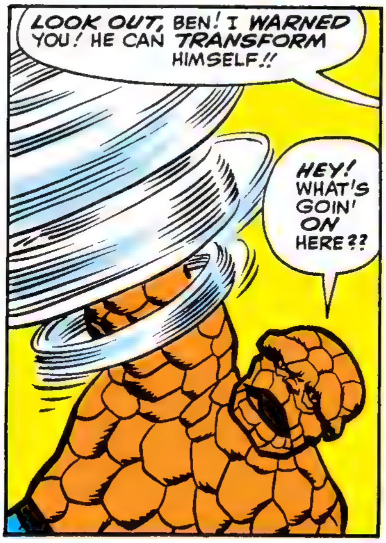

LEST YOU GET ANY RASH NOTIONS, RICHARDS, LET ME WARN YOU THAT THIS SHIP WORKS ON MAGNETIC POWER AND CAN BE CONTROLLED ONLY BY MY ORANGUTAN! IT IS IMPOSSIBLE FOR YOU, OR ANYONE TO CHANGE OUR DESTINATION!
BOY! I HALF EXPECT BELA LUGOSI TO POP OUT FROM BEHIND ONE OF THOSE GIZMOS!
VERY WELL, MY BEAUTY! EVERYTHING IS SET! PROCEED ACCORDING TO MY PLAN! OUR NEXT STOP WILL BE... THE MOON!
NOW I'M WARNING YOU, FELLA! ANY SURRENDERING WE DID, APPLIED TO OUR POSITION ON EARTH! ONCE WE REACH THE MOON, IT'S EVERY MAN FOR HIMSELF!
WITH THOSE WORDS STILL RINGING IN THEIR EARS, THE ODDLY-ASSORTED OCCUPANTS OF THE UNIQUE MOON-SHIP ARE HURLED BACK BY THE FORCE OF THE BLAST-OFF, AND THEN, AFTER A SILENT, BREATHTAKING JOURNEY... TWO DAY LATER...
WE HAVE REACHED OUR DESTINATION, RICHARDS! NOW YOU SHALL SEE HOW EMPTY YOUR THREAT WAS... HOW POWERLESS YOU REALLY ARE!

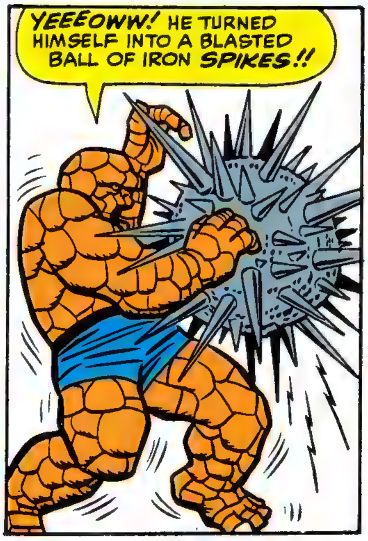

POWERLESS, ARE WE?? OKAY, KIDDIES... THERE'S REED'S SIGNAL!! LET'S GO!! ...GIMME THAT GUN, YOU BLASTED, BOB-TAILED PIPSQUEAK!
CAREFUL, BEN! REMEMBER, THE BABOON CAN TURN HIMSELF INTO ALMOST ANYTHING AT WILL!
I'LL KEEP THAT POOR MAN'S KING KONG OUT OF ACTION WITH A FIREBALL SHIELD!
I EXPECTED YOU TO TRY THIS, YOU FOOLS! HAVE YOU FORGOTTEN ALL OUR POWERS SO SOON?!

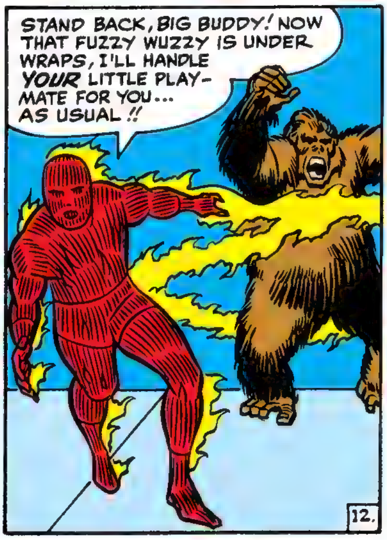

IT IS NOT FOR NOTHING THAT I AM CALLED THE RED GHOST! SEE HOW EASILY I CAN ESCAPE YOUR CRUDE ATTACK!

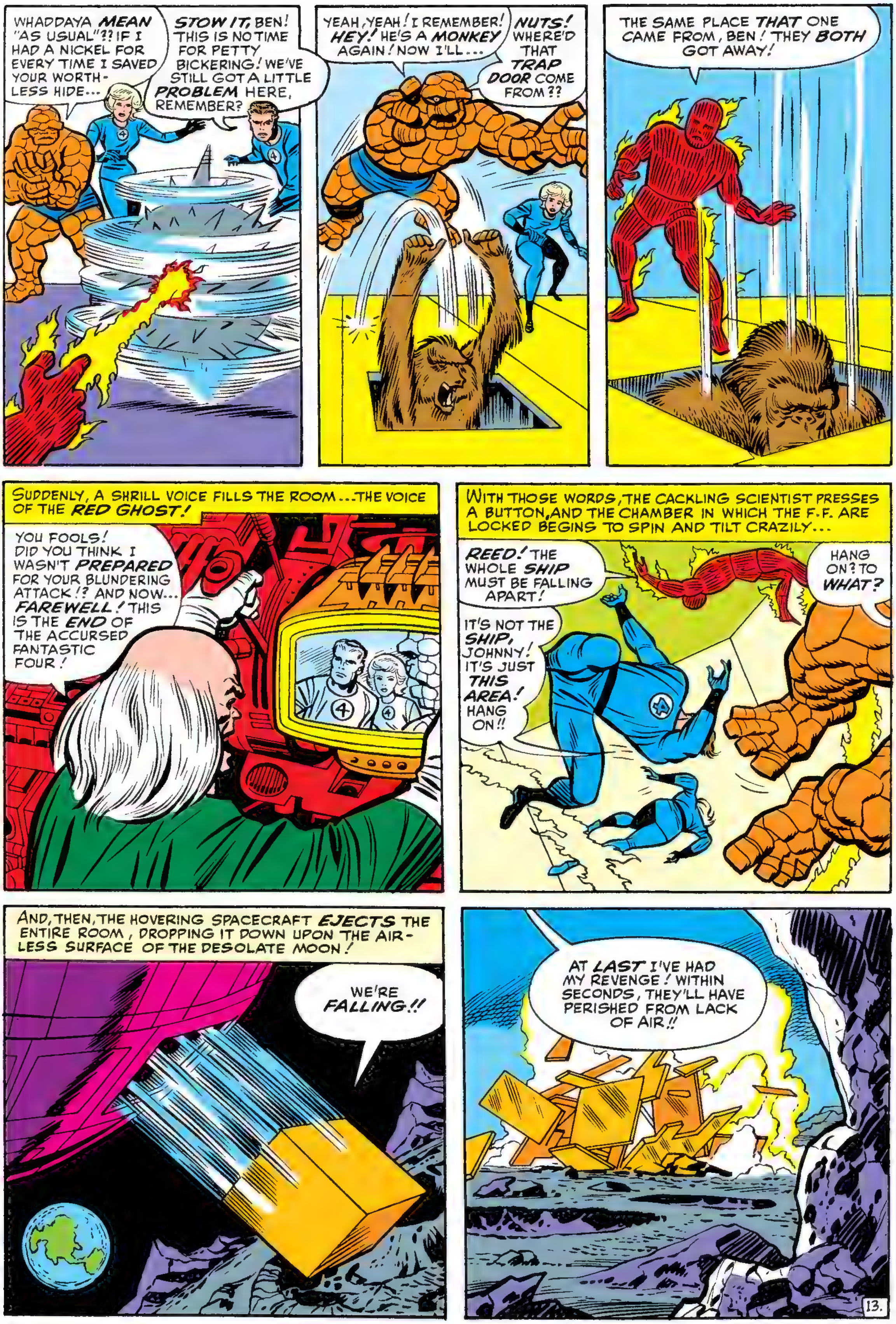

HE'S RIGHT! HE STILL HAS THE UNCANNY POWER TO MAKE HIS BODY SOLID, OR ETHEREAL, AS THE NEED ARISES!

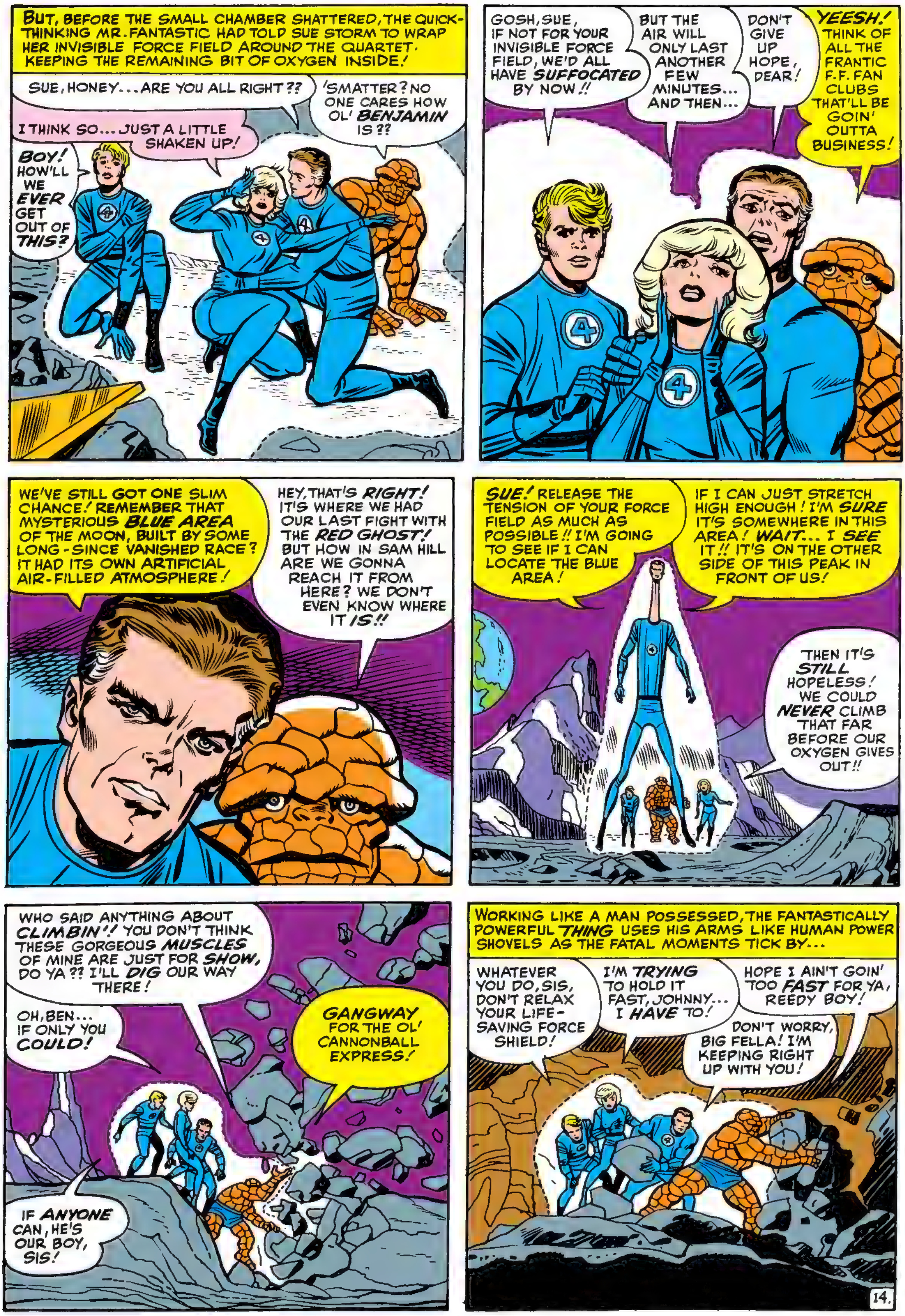

STOP STRUGGLIN', SMALL FRY! YOU'VE GOT AS MUCH CHANCE OF BREAKIN' MY GRIP AS YOU GOT OF WINNIN' THE MISS AMERICA CONTEST!

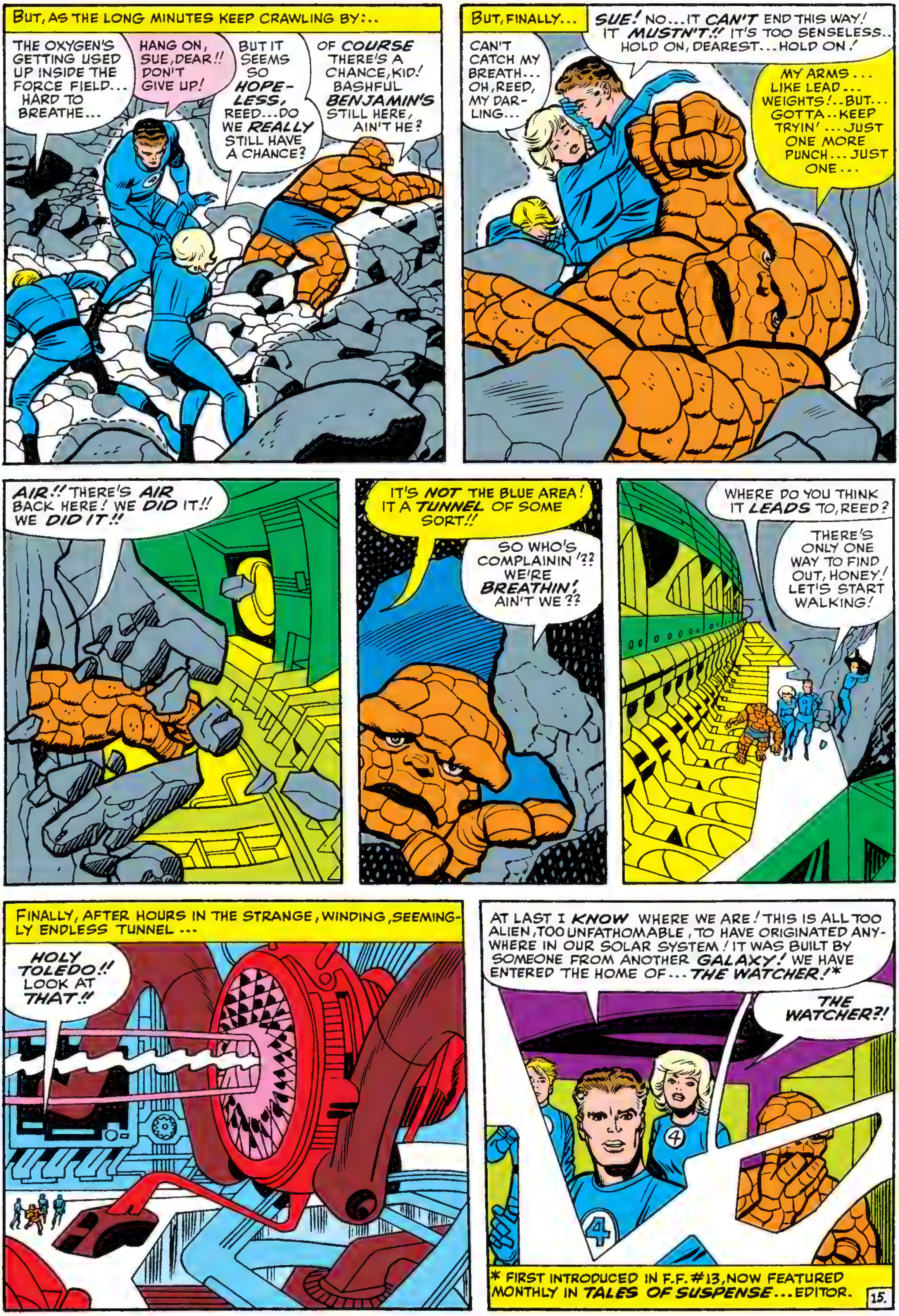

LOOK OUT, BEN! I WARNED YOU! HE CAN TRANSFORM HIMSELF!!
HEY! WHAT'S GOIN' ON HERE??

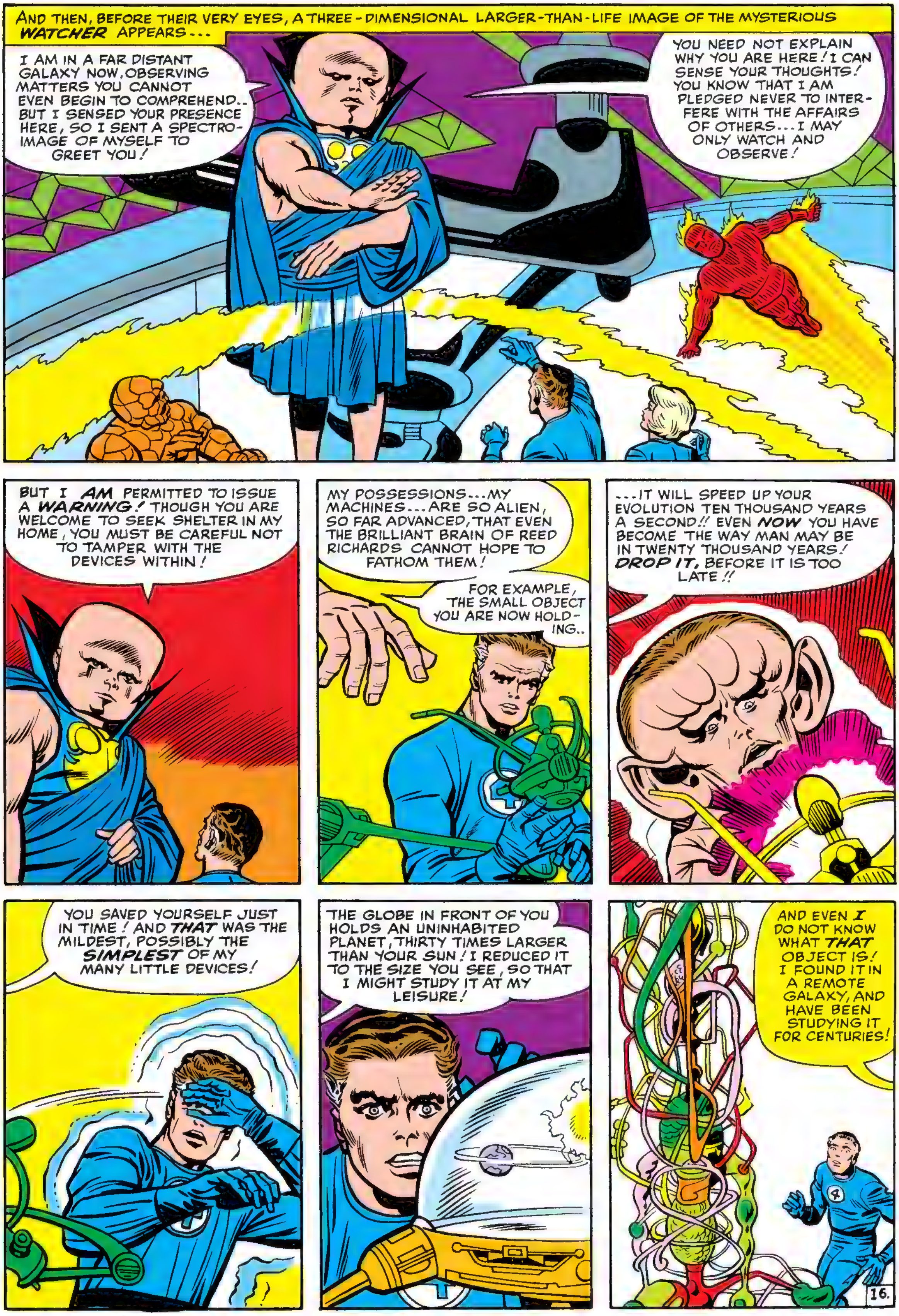

YEEEOWW! HE TURNED HIMSELF INTO A BLASTED BALL OF IRON SPIKES!!


STAND BACK, BIG BUDDY! NOW THAT FUZZY WUZZY IS UNDER WRAPS, I'LL HANDLE YOUR LITTLE PLAYMATE FOR YOU... AS USUAL!!


WHADDAYA MEAN "AS USUAL"?? IF I HAD A NICKEL FOR EVERY TIME I SAVED YOUR WORTHLESS HIDE...
STOW IT, BEN! THIS IS NO TIME FOR PETTY BICKERING! WE'VE STILL GOT A LITTLE PROBLEM HERE, REMEMBER?
YEAH, YEAH! I REMEMBER! HEY! HE'S A MONKEY AGAIN! NOW I'LL...
NUTS! WHERE'D THAT TRAP DOOR COME FROM??
THE SAME PLACE THAT ONE CAME FROM, BEN! THEY BOTH GOT AWAY!
SUDDENLY, A SHRILL VOICE FILLS THE ROOM...THE VOICE OF THE RED GHOST!
YOU FOOLS! DID YOU THINK I WASN'T PREPARED FOR YOUR BLUNDERING ATTACK!? AND NOW... FAREWELL! THIS IS THE END OF THE ACCURSED FANTASTIC FOUR!
WITH THOSE WORDS, THE CACKLING SCIENTIST PRESSES A BUTTON, AND THE CHAMBER IN WHICH THE F.F. ARE LOCKED BEGINS TO SPIN AND TILT CRAZILY...
REED! THE WHOLE SHIP MUST BE FALLING APART!
HANG ON? TO WHAT?
IT'S NOT THE SHIP, JOHNNY! IT'S JUST THIS AREA! HANG ON!!
AND, THEN, THE HOVERING SPACECRAFT EJECTS THE ENTIRE ROOM, DROPPING IT DOWN UPON THE AIRLESS SURFACE OF THE DESOLATE MOON!
WE'RE FALLING!!
AT LAST I'VE HAD MY REVENGE! WITHIN SECONDS, THEY'LL HAVE PERISHED FROM LACK OF AIR!!


BUT, BEFORE THE SMALL CHAMBER SHATTERED, THE QUICK-THINKING MR. FANTASTIC HAD TOLD SUE STORM TO WRAP HER INVISIBLE FORCE FIELD AROUND THE QUARTET, KEEPING THE REMAINING BIT OF OXYGEN INSIDE!
SUE, HONEY... ARE YOU ALL RIGHT??
'SMATTER? NO ONE CARES HOW OL' BENJAMIN IS??
I THINK SO... JUST A LITTLE SHAKEN UP!
BOY! HOW'LL WE EVER GET OUT OF THIS?
GOSH, SUE, IF NOT FOR YOUR INVISIBLE FORCE FIELD, WE'D ALL HAVE SUFFOCATED BY NOW!!
BUT THE AIR WILL ONLY LAST ANOTHER FEW MINUTES... AND THEN...
DON'T GIVE UP HOPE, DEAR!
YEESH! THINK OF ALL THE FRANTIC F.F. FAN CLUBS THAT'LL BE GOIN' OUTTA BUSINESS!
WE'VE STILL GOT ONE SLIM CHANCE! REMEMBER THAT MYSTERIOUS BLUE AREA OF THE MOON, BUILT BY SOME LONG-SINCE VANISHED RACE? IT HAD ITS OWN ARTIFICIAL AIR-FILLED ATMOSPHERE!
HEY, THAT'S RIGHT! IT'S WHERE WE HAD OUR LAST FIGHT WITH THE RED GHOST! BUT HOW IN SAM HILL ARE WE GONNA REACH IT FROM HERE? WE DON'T EVEN KNOW WHERE IT IS!!
SUE! RELEASE THE TENSION OF YOUR FORCE FIELD AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE!! I'M GOING TO SEE IF I CAN LOCATE THE BLUE AREA!
IF I CAN JUST STRETCH HIGH ENOUGH! I'M SURE IT'S SOMEWHERE IN THIS AREA! WAIT... I SEE IT!! IT'S ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THIS PEAK IN FRONT OF US!
THEN IT'S STILL HOPELESS! WE COULD NEVER CLIMB THAT FAR BEFORE OUR OXYGEN GIVES OUT!!
WHO SAID ANYTHING ABOUT CLIMBIN'!! YOU DON'T THINK THESE GORGEOUS MUSCLES OF MINE ARE JUST FOR SHOW, DO YA?? I'LL DIG OUR WAY THERE!
OH, BEN... IF ONLY YOU COULD!
GANGWAY FOR THE OL' CANNONBALL EXPRESS!
IF ANYONE CAN, HE'S OUR BOY, SIS!
WORKING LIKE A MAN POSSESSED, THE FANTASTICALLY POWERFUL THING USES HIS ARMS LIKE HUMAN POWER SHOVELS AS THE FATAL MOMENTS TICK BY...
WHATEVER YOU DO, SIS, DON'T RELAX YOUR LIFE-SAVING FORCE SHIELD!
I'M TRYING TO HOLD IT FAST, JOHNNY... I HAVE TO!
HOPE I AIN'T GOIN' TOO FAST FOR YA, REEDY BOY!
DON'T WORRY, BIG FELLA! I'M KEEPING RIGHT UP WITH YOU!


BUT, AS THE LONG MINUTES KEEP CRAWLING BY:..
THE OXYGEN'S GETTING USED UP INSIDE THE FORCE FIELD... HARD TO BREATHE...
HANG ON, SUE, DEAR!! DON'T GIVE UP!
BUT IT SEEMS SO HOPELESS, REED...DO WE REALLY STILL HAVE A CHANCE?
OF COURSE THERE'S A CHANCE, KID! BASHFUL BENJAMIN'S STILL HERE, AIN'T HE?
BUT, FINALLY...
CAN'T CATCH MY BREATH... OH, REED, MY DARLING...
SUE! NO...IT CAN'T END THIS WAY! IT MUSTN'T!! IT'S TOO SENSELESS.. HOLD ON, DEAREST...HOLD ON!
MY ARMS... LIKE LEAD... WEIGHTS!..BUT... GOTTA..KEEP TRYIN' ...JUST ONE MORE PUNCH...JUST ONE...
AIR!! THERE'S AIR BACK HERE! WE DID IT!! WE DID IT!!
IT'S NOT THE BLUE AREA! IT A TUNNEL OF SOME SORT!!
SO WHO'S COMPLAININ'?? WE'RE BREATHIN', AIN'T WE??
WHERE DO YOU THINK IT LEADS TO, REED?
THERE'S ONLY ONE WAY TO FIND OUT, HONEY! LET'S START WALKING!
FINALLY, AFTER HOURS IN THE STRANGE, WINDING, SEEMINGLY ENDLESS TUNNEL ...
HOLY TOLEDO!! LOOK AT THAT!!
AT LAST I KNOW WHERE WE ARE! THIS IS ALL TOO ALIEN, TOO UNFATHOMABLE, TO HAVE ORIGINATED ANYWHERE IN OUR SOLAR SYSTEM! IT WAS BUILT BY SOMEONE FROM ANOTHER GALAXY! WE HAVE ENTERED THE HOME OF... THE WATCHER!*
THE WATCHER?!
* FIRST INTRODUCED IN F.F. #13, NOW FEATURED MONTHLY IN TALES OF SUSPENSE...EDITOR.


AND THEN, BEFORE THEIR VERY EYES, A THREE-DIMENSIONAL LARGER-THAN-LIFE IMAGE OF THE MYSTERIOUS **WATCHER** APPEARS...
I AM IN A FAR DISTANT GALAXY NOW, OBSERVING MATTERS YOU CANNOT EVEN BEGIN TO COMPREHEND.. BUT I SENSED YOUR PRESENCE HERE, SO I SENT A SPECTRO-IMAGE OF MYSELF TO GREET YOU!
YOU NEED NOT EXPLAIN WHY YOU ARE HERE! I CAN SENSE YOUR THOUGHTS! YOU KNOW THAT I AM PLEDGED NEVER TO INTERFERE WITH THE AFFAIRS OF OTHERS... I MAY ONLY WATCH AND OBSERVE!
BUT I **AM** PERMITTED TO ISSUE A **WARNING!** THOUGH YOU ARE WELCOME TO SEEK SHELTER IN MY HOME, YOU MUST BE CAREFUL NOT TO TAMPER WITH THE DEVICES WITHIN!
MY POSSESSIONS... MY MACHINES... ARE SO ALIEN, SO FAR ADVANCED, THAT EVEN THE BRILLIANT BRAIN OF REED RICHARDS CANNOT HOPE TO FATHOM THEM!
FOR EXAMPLE, THE SMALL OBJECT YOU ARE NOW HOLDING..
...IT WILL SPEED UP YOUR EVOLUTION TEN THOUSAND YEARS A SECOND!! EVEN **NOW** YOU HAVE BECOME THE WAY MAN MAY BE IN TWENTY THOUSAND YEARS! **DROP IT,** BEFORE IT IS TOO LATE!!
YOU SAVED YOURSELF JUST IN TIME! AND **THAT** WAS THE MILDEST, POSSIBLY THE **SIMPLEST** OF MY MANY LITTLE DEVICES!
THE GLOBE IN FRONT OF YOU HOLDS AN UNINHABITED PLANET, THIRTY TIMES LARGER THAN YOUR **SUN**! I REDUCED IT TO THE SIZE YOU SEE, SO THAT I MIGHT STUDY IT AT MY LEISURE!
AND EVEN **I** DO NOT KNOW WHAT **THAT** OBJECT IS! I FOUND IT IN A REMOTE GALAXY, AND HAVE BEEN STUDYING IT FOR CENTURIES!
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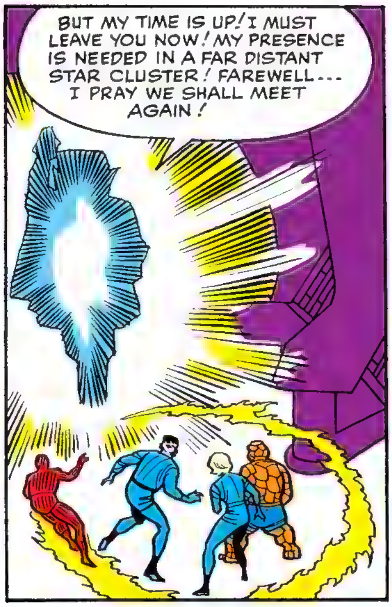
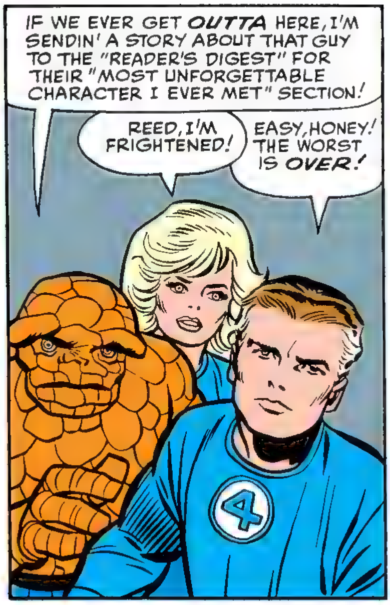
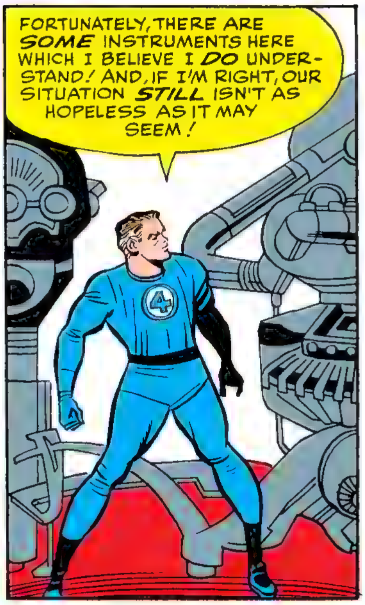
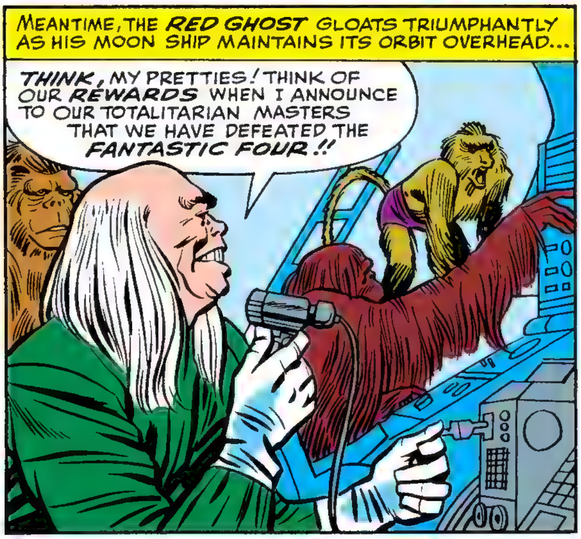
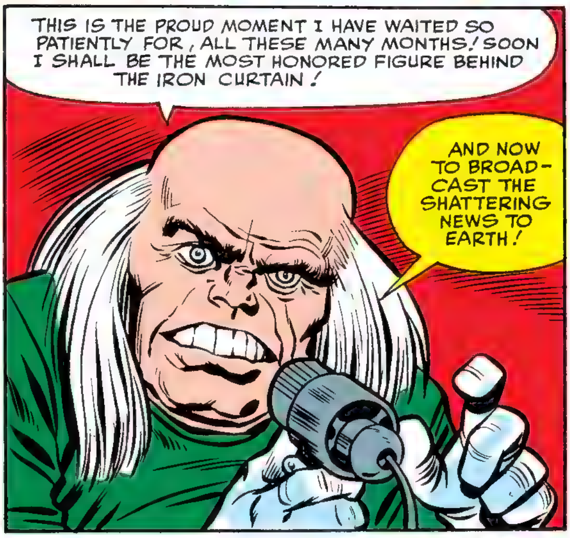
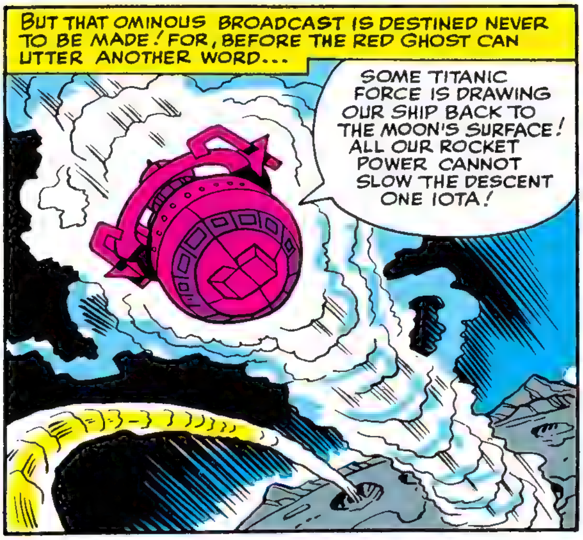

BUT MY TIME IS UP! I MUST LEAVE YOU NOW! MY PRESENCE IS NEEDED IN A FAR DISTANT STAR CLUSTER! FAREWELL... I PRAY WE SHALL MEET AGAIN!

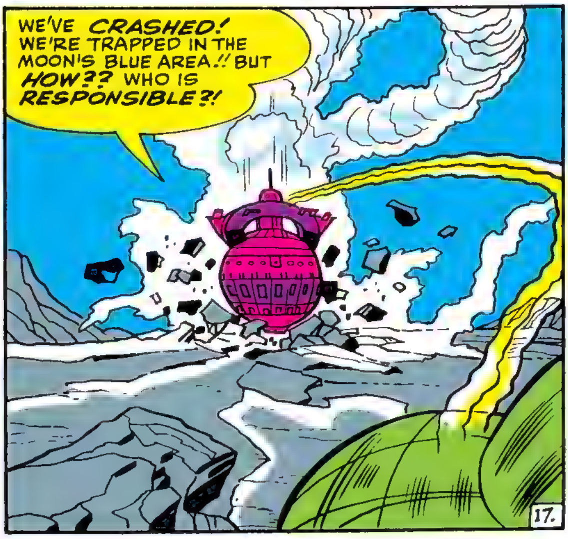

IF WE EVER GET *OUTTA* HERE, I'M SENDIN' A STORY ABOUT THAT GUY TO THE "READER'S DIGEST" FOR THEIR "MOST UNFORGETTABLE CHARACTER I EVER MET" SECTION!
REED, I'M FRIGHTENED!
EASY, HONEY! THE WORST IS *OVER!*

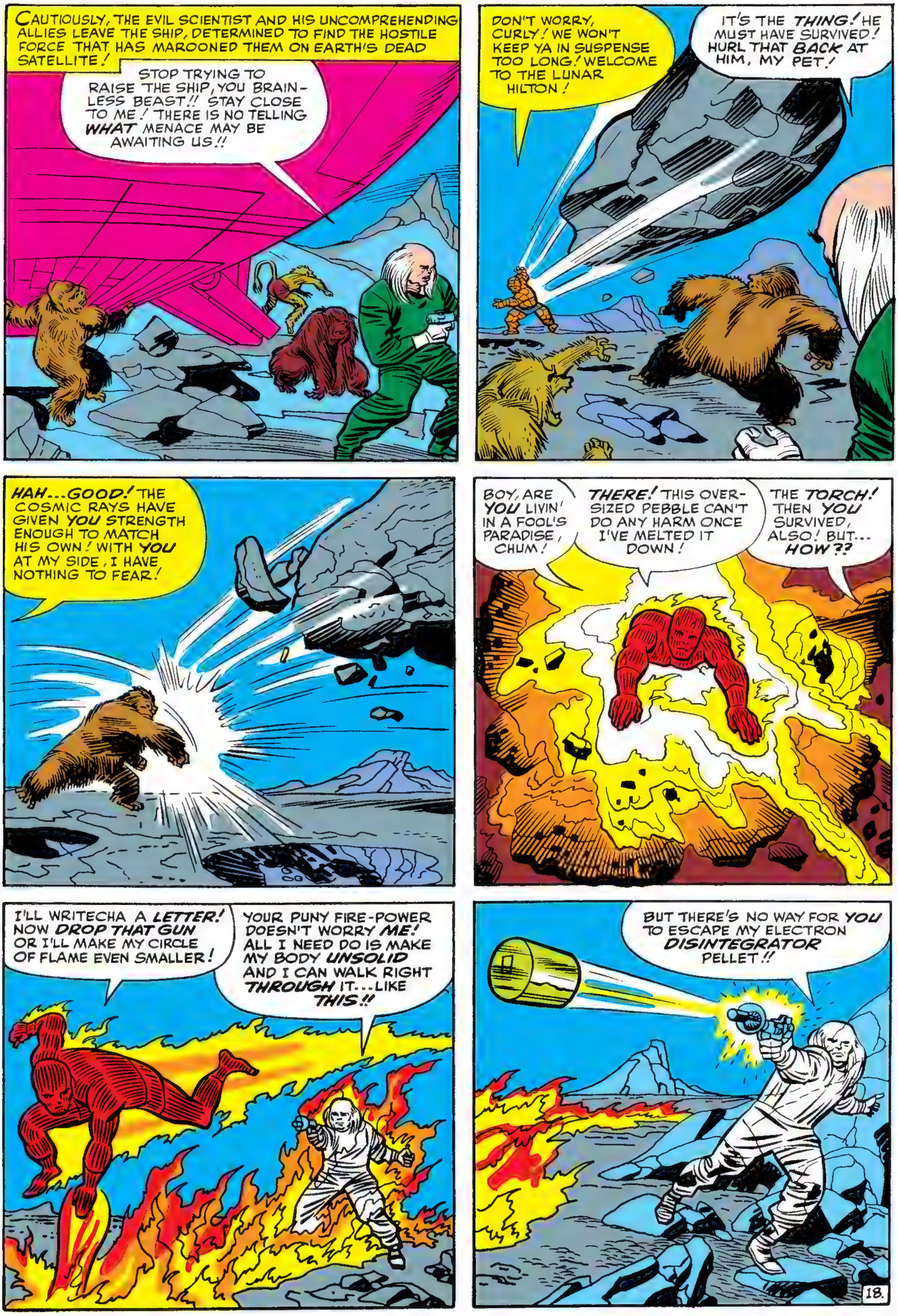

FORTUNATELY, THERE ARE *SOME* INSTRUMENTS HERE WHICH I BELIEVE I *DO* UNDERSTAND! AND, IF I'M RIGHT, OUR SITUATION *STILL* ISN'T AS HOPELESS AS IT MAY SEEM!

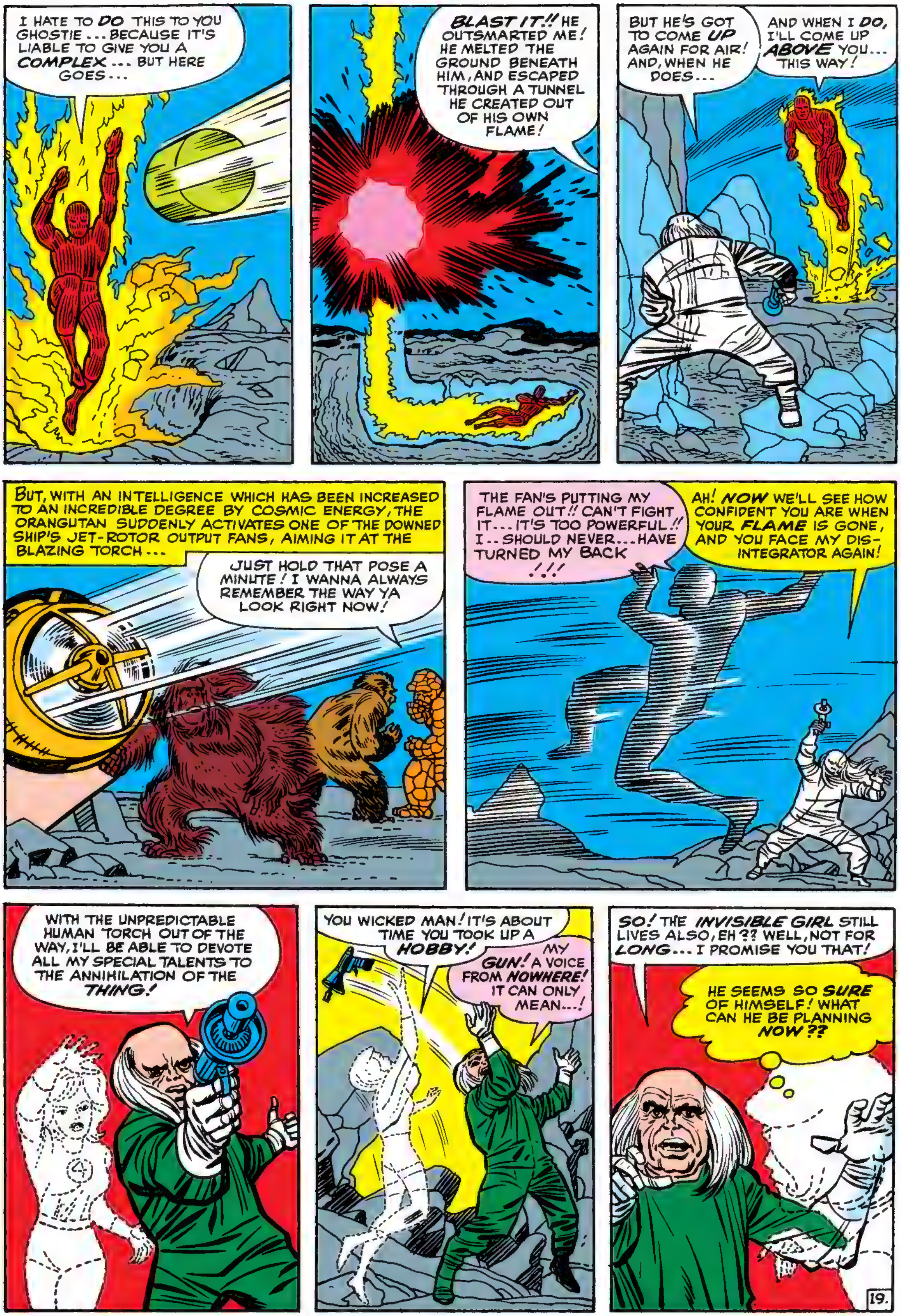

MEANTIME, THE ***RED GHOST*** GLOATS TRIUMPHANTLY AS HIS MOON SHIP MAINTAINS ITS ORBIT OVERHEAD...
THINK, MY PRETTIES! THINK OF OUR ***REWARDS*** WHEN I ANNOUNCE TO OUR TOTALITARIAN MASTERS THAT WE HAVE DEFEATED THE ***FANTASTIC FOUR!!***

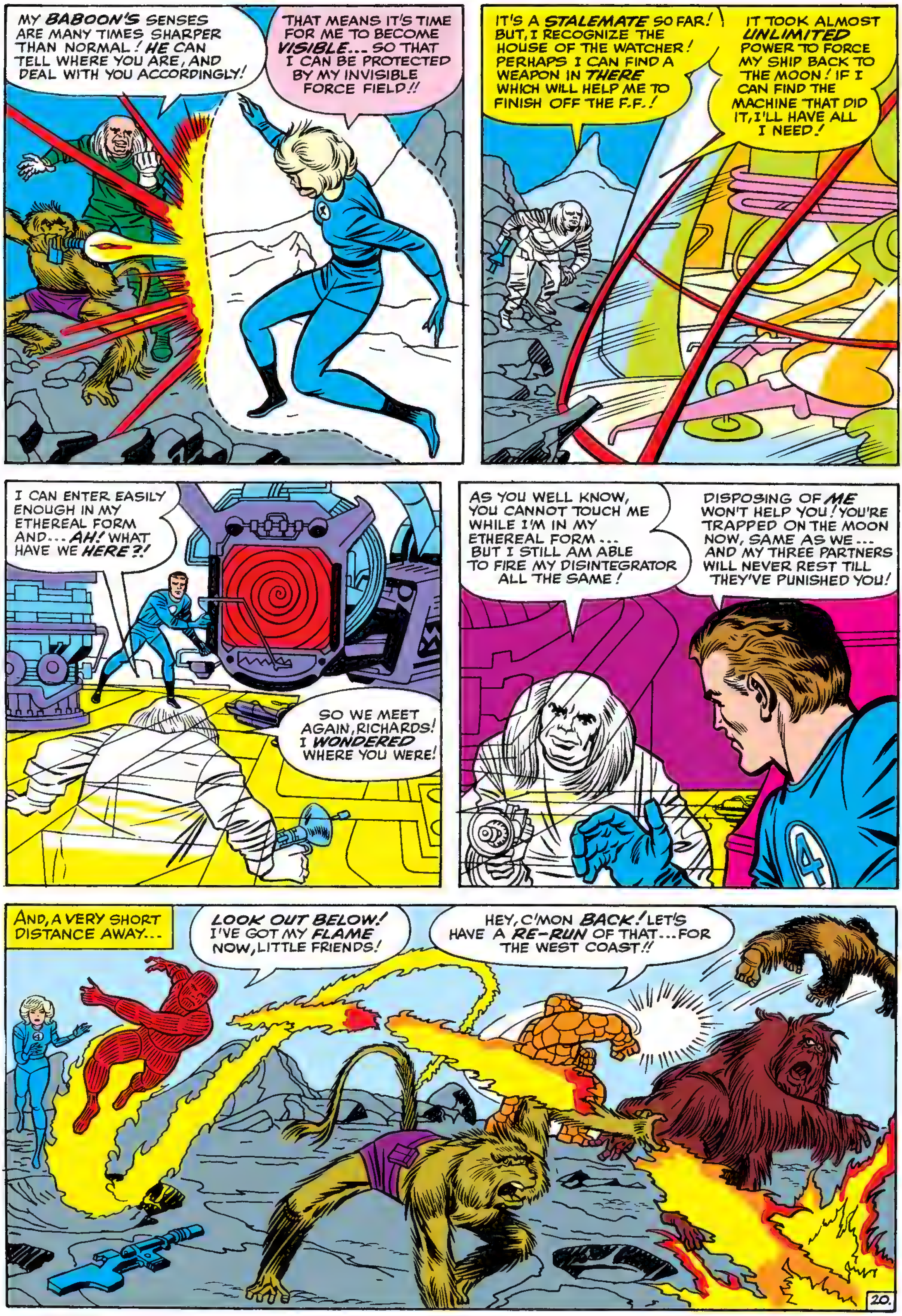

THIS IS THE PROUD MOMENT I HAVE WAITED SO PATIENTLY FOR, ALL THESE MANY MONTHS! SOON I SHALL BE THE MOST HONORED FIGURE BEHIND THE IRON CURTAIN!
AND NOW TO BROADCAST THE SHATTERING NEWS TO EARTH!


BUT THAT OMINOUS BROADCAST IS DESTINED NEVER TO BE MADE! FOR, BEFORE THE RED GHOST CAN UTTER ANOTHER WORD...
SOME TITANIC FORCE IS DRAWING OUR SHIP BACK TO THE MOON'S SURFACE! ALL OUR ROCKET POWER CANNOT SLOW THE DESCENT ONE IOTA!


WE'VE ***CRASHED!*** WE'RE TRAPPED IN THE MOON'S BLUE AREA!! BUT ***HOW??*** WHO IS ***RESPONSIBLE?!***


CAUTIOUSLY, THE EVIL SCIENTIST AND HIS UNCOMPREHENDING ALLIES LEAVE THE SHIP, DETERMINED TO FIND THE HOSTILE FORCE THAT HAS MAROONED THEM ON EARTH'S DEAD SATELLITE!
STOP TRYING TO RAISE THE SHIP, YOU BRAINLESS BEAST!! STAY CLOSE TO ME! THERE IS NO TELLING *WHAT* MENACE MAY BE AWAITING US!!
DON'T WORRY, CURLY! WE WON'T KEEP YA IN SUSPENSE TOO LONG! WELCOME TO THE LUNAR HILTON!
IT'S THE *THING!* HE MUST HAVE SURVIVED! HURL THAT *BACK* AT HIM, MY PET!
HAH...GOOD! THE COSMIC RAYS HAVE GIVEN *YOU* STRENGTH ENOUGH TO MATCH HIS OWN! WITH *YOU* AT MY SIDE, I HAVE NOTHING TO FEAR!
BOY, ARE *YOU* LIVIN' IN A FOOL'S PARADISE, CHUM!
THERE! THIS OVER-SIZED PEBBLE CAN'T DO ANY HARM ONCE I'VE MELTED IT DOWN!
THE *TORCH!* THEN *YOU* SURVIVED, ALSO! BUT... *HOW??*
I'LL WRITECHA A *LETTER!* NOW *DROP THAT GUN* OR I'LL MAKE MY CIRCLE OF FLAME EVEN SMALLER!
YOUR PUNY FIRE-POWER DOESN'T WORRY *ME!* ALL I NEED DO IS MAKE MY BODY *UNSOLID* AND I CAN WALK RIGHT *THROUGH* IT...LIKE *THIS!!*
BUT THERE'S NO WAY FOR *YOU* TO ESCAPE MY ELECTRON *DISINTEGRATOR* PELLET!!


I HATE TO *DO* THIS TO YOU GHOSTIE... BECAUSE IT'S LIABLE TO GIVE YOU A *COMPLEX*... BUT HERE GOES...
BLAST IT!! HE OUTSMARTED ME! HE MELTED THE GROUND BENEATH HIM, AND ESCAPED THROUGH A TUNNEL HE CREATED OUT OF HIS OWN FLAME!
BUT HE'S GOT TO COME *UP* AGAIN FOR AIR! AND, WHEN HE DOES...
AND WHEN I *DO*, I'LL COME UP *ABOVE* YOU... THIS WAY!
BUT, WITH AN INTELLIGENCE WHICH HAS BEEN INCREASED TO AN INCREDIBLE DEGREE BY COSMIC ENERGY, THE ORANGUTAN SUDDENLY ACTIVATES ONE OF THE DOWNED SHIP'S JET-ROTOR OUTPUT FANS, AIMING IT AT THE BLAZING TORCH...
JUST HOLD THAT POSE A MINUTE! I WANNA ALWAYS REMEMBER THE WAY YA LOOK RIGHT NOW!
THE FAN'S PUTTING MY FLAME OUT!! CAN'T FIGHT IT... IT'S TOO POWERFUL!! I... SHOULD NEVER... HAVE TURNED MY BACK !!!
AH! *NOW* WE'LL SEE HOW CONFIDENT YOU ARE WHEN YOUR *FLAME* IS GONE, AND YOU FACE MY DISINTEGRATOR AGAIN!
WITH THE UNPREDICTABLE HUMAN TORCH OUT OF THE WAY, I'LL BE ABLE TO DEVOTE ALL MY SPECIAL TALENTS TO THE ANNIHILATION OF THE *THING!*
YOU WICKED MAN! IT'S ABOUT TIME YOU TOOK UP A *HOBBY!*
MY *GUN!* A VOICE FROM *NOWHERE!* IT CAN ONLY MEAN...!
SO! THE *INVISIBLE GIRL* STILL LIVES ALSO, EH?? WELL, NOT FOR *LONG*... I PROMISE YOU THAT!
HE SEEMS SO *SURE* OF HIMSELF! WHAT CAN HE BE PLANNING *NOW??*


MY *BABOON'S* SENSES ARE MANY TIMES SHARPER THAN NORMAL! *HE* CAN TELL WHERE YOU ARE, AND DEAL WITH YOU ACCORDINGLY!
THAT MEANS IT'S TIME FOR ME TO BECOME *VISIBLE*... SO THAT I CAN BE PROTECTED BY MY INVISIBLE FORCE FIELD!!
IT'S A *STALEMATE* SO FAR! BUT, I RECOGNIZE THE HOUSE OF THE WATCHER! PERHAPS I CAN FIND A WEAPON IN *THERE* WHICH WILL HELP ME TO FINISH OFF THE F.F.!
IT TOOK ALMOST *UNLIMITED* POWER TO FORCE MY SHIP BACK TO THE MOON! IF I CAN FIND THE MACHINE THAT DID IT, I'LL HAVE ALL I NEED!
I CAN ENTER EASILY ENOUGH IN MY ETHEREAL FORM AND... *AH!* WHAT HAVE WE *HERE?!*
SO WE MEET AGAIN, RICHARDS! I *WONDERED* WHERE YOU WERE!
AS YOU WELL KNOW, YOU CANNOT TOUCH ME WHILE I'M IN MY ETHEREAL FORM... BUT I STILL AM ABLE TO FIRE MY DISINTEGRATOR ALL THE SAME!
DISPOSING OF *ME* WON'T HELP YOU! YOU'RE TRAPPED ON THE MOON NOW, SAME AS WE... AND MY THREE PARTNERS WILL NEVER REST TILL THEY'VE PUNISHED YOU!
AND, A VERY SHORT DISTANCE AWAY...
LOOK OUT BELOW! I'VE GOT MY *FLAME* NOW, LITTLE FRIENDS!
HEY, C'MON *BACK!* LET'S HAVE A *RE-RUN* OF THAT... FOR THE WEST COAST!!
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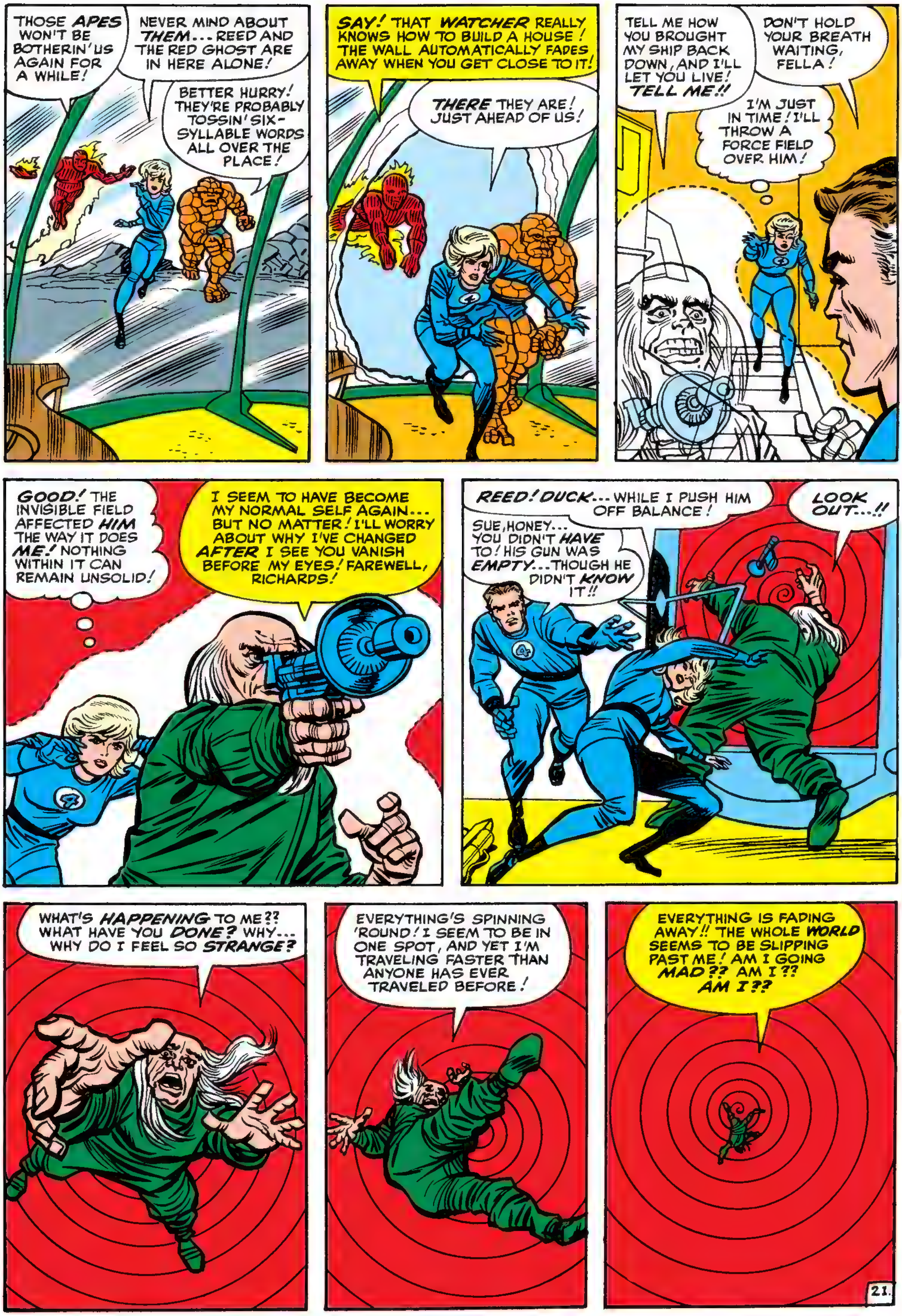
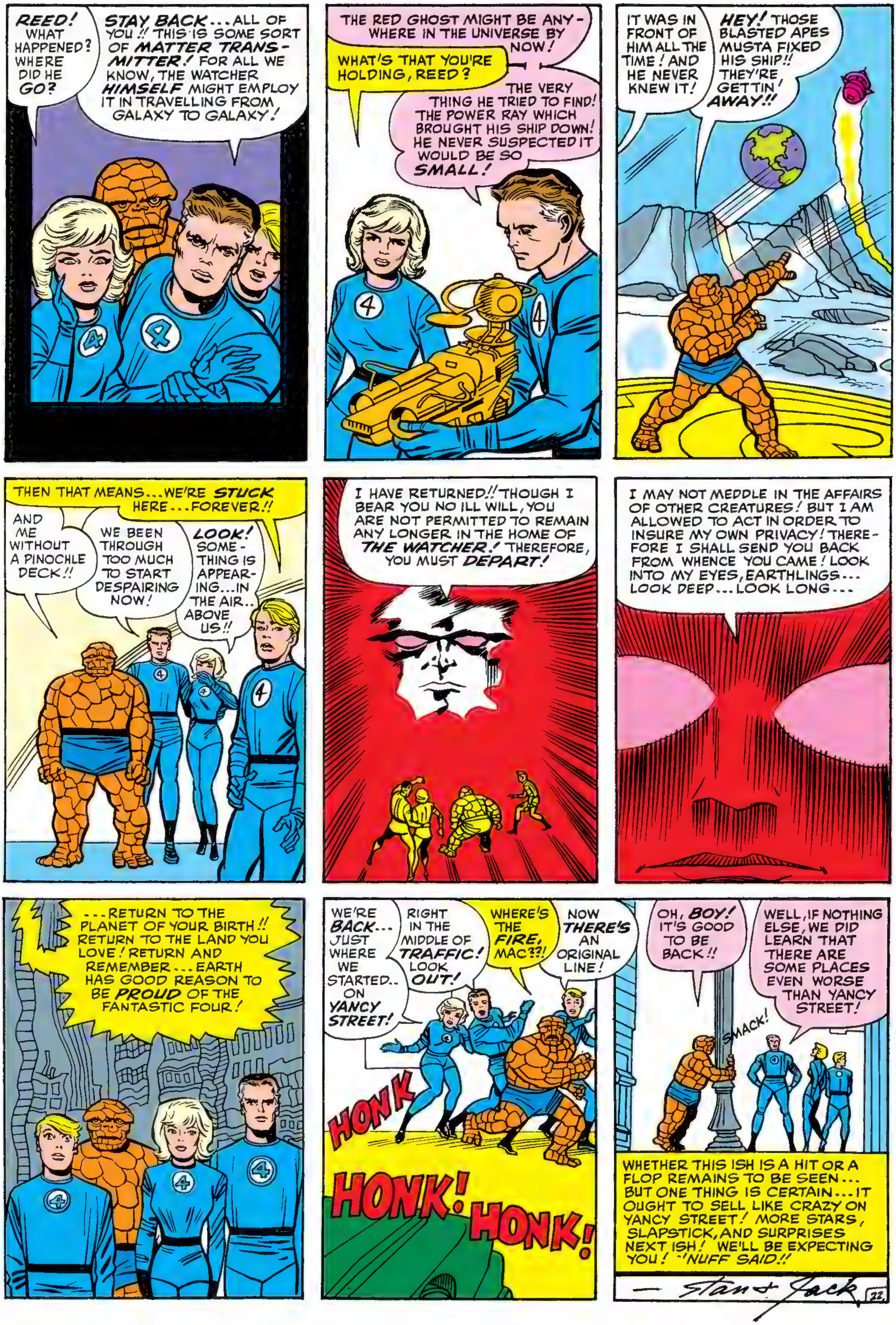
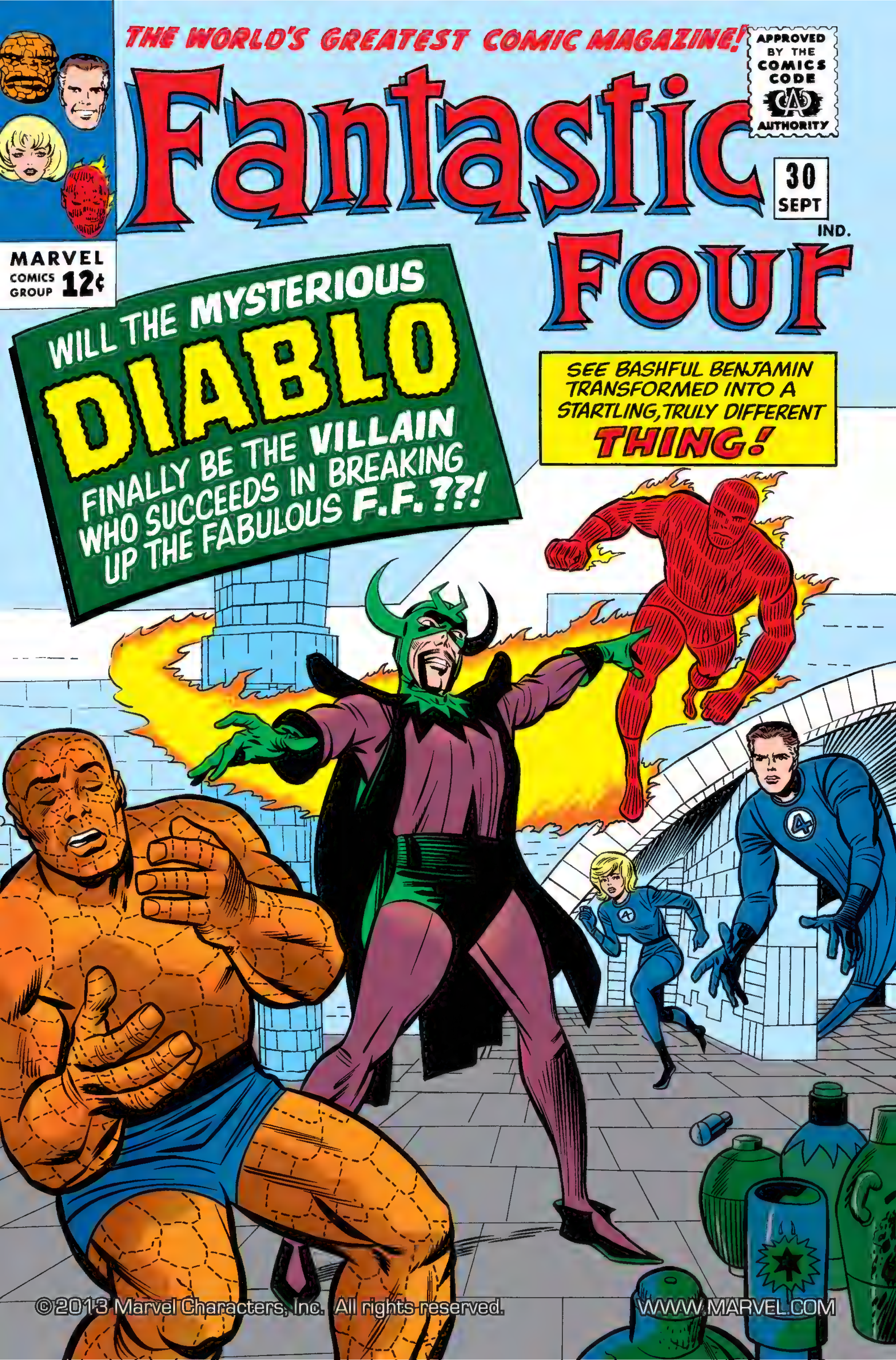

THOSE **APES** WON'T BE BOTHERIN' US AGAIN FOR A WHILE!
NEVER MIND ABOUT **THEM**... REED AND THE RED GHOST ARE IN HERE ALONE!
BETTER HURRY! THEY'RE PROBABLY TOSSIN' SIX-SYLLABLE WORDS ALL OVER THE PLACE!
SAY! THAT **WATCHER** REALLY KNOWS HOW TO BUILD A HOUSE! THE WALL AUTOMATICALLY FADES AWAY WHEN YOU GET CLOSE TO IT!
THERE THEY ARE! JUST AHEAD OF US!
TELL ME HOW YOU BROUGHT MY SHIP BACK DOWN, AND I'LL LET YOU LIVE! **TELL ME!!**
DON'T HOLD YOUR BREATH WAITING, FELLA!
I'M JUST IN TIME! I'LL THROW A FORCE FIELD OVER HIM!
GOOD! THE INVISIBLE FIELD AFFECTED **HIM** THE WAY IT DOES **ME!** NOTHING WITHIN IT CAN REMAIN UNSOLID!
I SEEM TO HAVE BECOME MY NORMAL SELF AGAIN... BUT NO MATTER! I'LL WORRY ABOUT WHY I'VE CHANGED **AFTER** I SEE YOU VANISH BEFORE MY EYES! FAREWELL, RICHARDS!
REED! DUCK... WHILE I PUSH HIM OFF BALANCE!
SUE, HONEY... YOU DIDN'T **HAVE** TO! HIS GUN WAS **EMPTY**... THOUGH HE DIDN'T **KNOW** IT!!
LOOK OUT...!!
WHAT'S **HAPPENING** TO ME?? WHAT HAVE YOU **DONE?** WHY... WHY DO I FEEL SO **STRANGE?**
EVERYTHING'S SPINNING 'ROUND! I SEEM TO BE IN ONE SPOT, AND YET I'M TRAVELING FASTER THAN ANYONE HAS EVER TRAVELED BEFORE!
EVERYTHING IS FADING AWAY!! THE WHOLE **WORLD** SEEMS TO BE SLIPPING PAST ME! AM I GOING **MAD??** AM I?? **AM I??**


REED! WHAT HAPPENED? WHERE DID HE GO?
STAY BACK... ALL OF YOU!! THIS IS SOME SORT OF MATTER TRANSMITTER! FOR ALL WE KNOW, THE WATCHER HIMSELF MIGHT EMPLOY IT IN TRAVELLING FROM GALAXY TO GALAXY!
THE RED GHOST MIGHT BE ANYWHERE IN THE UNIVERSE BY NOW!
WHAT'S THAT YOU'RE HOLDING, REED?
THE VERY THING HE TRIED TO FIND! THE POWER RAY WHICH BROUGHT HIS SHIP DOWN! HE NEVER SUSPECTED IT WOULD BE SO SMALL!
IT WAS IN FRONT OF HIM ALL THE TIME! AND HE NEVER KNEW IT!
HEY! THOSE BLASTED APES MUSTA FIXED HIS SHIP!! THEY'RE GETTIN' AWAY!!
THEN THAT MEANS... WE'RE STUCK HERE... FOREVER!!
AND ME WITHOUT A PINOCHLE DECK!!
WE BEEN THROUGH TOO MUCH TO START DESPAIRING NOW!
LOOK! SOMETHING IS APPEARING... IN THE AIR.. ABOVE US!!
I HAVE RETURNED!! THOUGH I BEAR YOU NO ILL WILL, YOU ARE NOT PERMITTED TO REMAIN ANY LONGER IN THE HOME OF THE WATCHER! THEREFORE, YOU MUST DEPART!
I MAY NOT MEDDLE IN THE AFFAIRS OF OTHER CREATURES! BUT I AM ALLOWED TO ACT IN ORDER TO INSURE MY OWN PRIVACY! THEREFORE I SHALL SEND YOU BACK FROM WHENCE YOU CAME! LOOK INTO MY EYES, EARTHLINGS... LOOK DEEP... LOOK LONG...
...RETURN TO THE PLANET OF YOUR BIRTH!! RETURN TO THE LAND YOU LOVE! RETURN AND REMEMBER... EARTH HAS GOOD REASON TO BE PROUD OF THE FANTASTIC FOUR!
WE'RE BACK... JUST WHERE WE STARTED.. ON YANCY STREET!
RIGHT IN THE MIDDLE OF TRAFFIC! LOOK OUT!
WHERE'S THE FIRE, MAC??!
NOW THERE'S AN ORIGINAL LINE!
HONK
HONK! HONK!
OH, BOY! IT'S GOOD TO BE BACK!!
WELL, IF NOTHING ELSE, WE DID LEARN THAT THERE ARE SOME PLACES EVEN WORSE THAN YANCY STREET!
SMACK!
WHETHER THIS ISH IS A HIT OR A FLOP REMAINS TO BE SEEN... BUT ONE THING IS CERTAIN... IT OUGHT TO SELL LIKE CRAZY ON YANCY STREET! MORE STARS, SLAPSTICK, AND SURPRISES NEXT ISH! WE'LL BE EXPECTING YOU! 'NUFF SAID!!
— Stan + Jack


THE WORLD'S GREATEST COMIC MAGAZINE!
APPROVED BY THE COMICS CODE CA AUTHORITY
Fantastic Four
30 SEPT
IND.
MARVEL COMICS GROUP 12¢
WILL THE MYSTERIOUS DIABLO FINALLY BE THE VILLAIN WHO SUCCEEDS IN BREAKING UP THE FABULOUS F.F.??!
SEE BASHFUL BENJAMIN TRANSFORMED INTO A STARTLING, TRULY DIFFERENT THING!
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4

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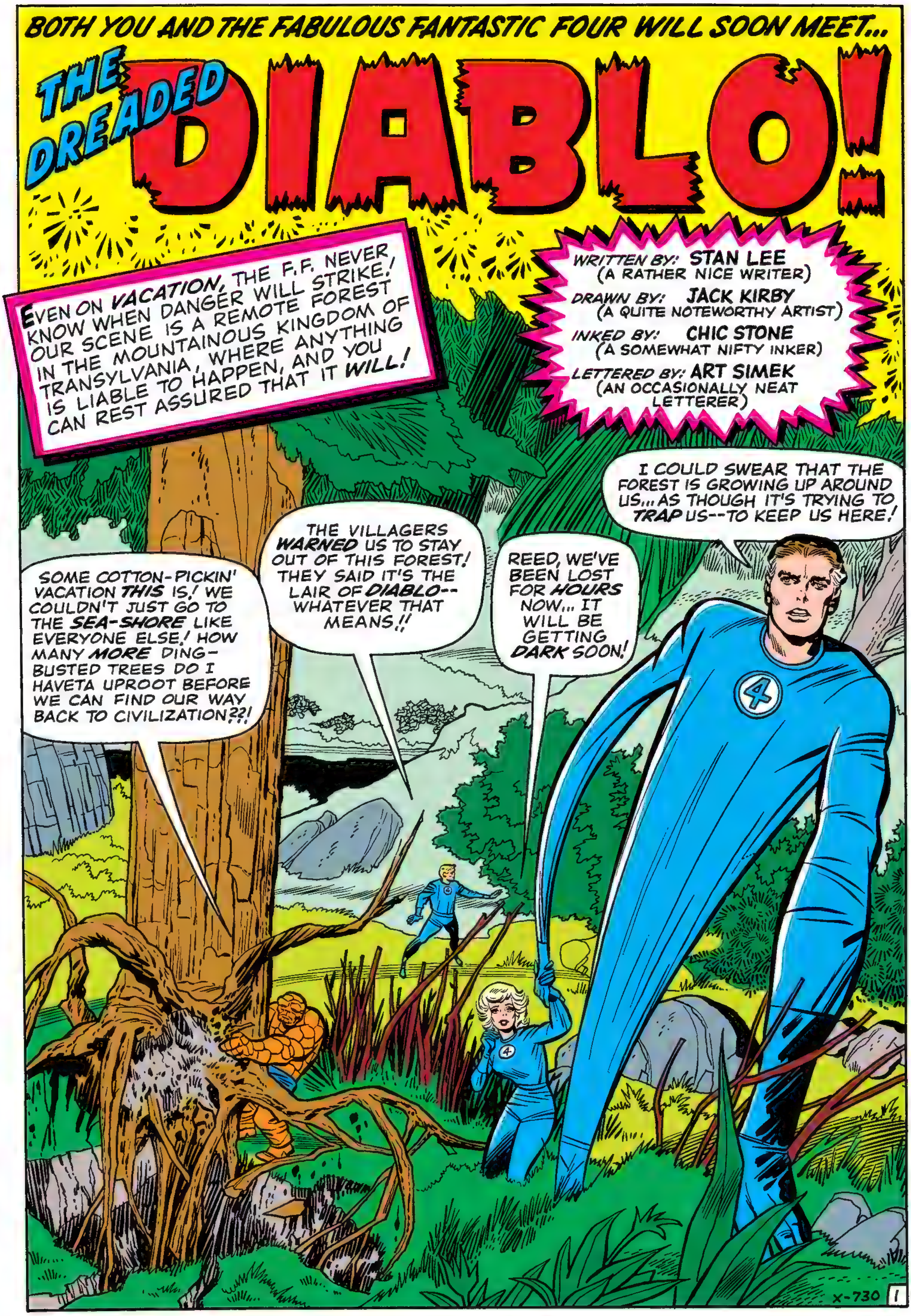
BOTH YOU AND THE FABULOUS FANTASTIC FOUR WILL SOON MEET...
THE DREADED DIABLO!
EVEN ON VACATION, THE F.F. NEVER KNOW WHEN DANGER WILL STRIKE! OUR SCENE IS A REMOTE FOREST IN THE MOUNTAINOUS KINGDOM OF TRANSYLVANIA, WHERE ANYTHING IS LIABLE TO HAPPEN, AND YOU CAN REST ASSURED THAT IT WILL!
WRITTEN BY: STAN LEE (A RATHER NICE WRITER)
DRAWN BY: JACK KIRBY (A QUITE NOTEWORTHY ARTIST)
INKED BY: CHIC STONE (A SOMEWHAT NIFTY INKER)
LETTERED BY: ART SIMEK (AN OCCASIONALLY NEAT LETTERER)
I COULD SWEAR THAT THE FOREST IS GROWING UP AROUND US... AS THOUGH IT'S TRYING TO TRAP US--TO KEEP US HERE!
SOME COTTON-PICKIN' VACATION THIS IS! WE COULDN'T JUST GO TO THE SEA-SHORE LIKE EVERYONE ELSE! HOW MANY MORE DING-BUSTED TREES DO I HAVETA UPROOT BEFORE WE CAN FIND OUR WAY BACK TO CIVILIZATION??!
THE VILLAGERS WARNED US TO STAY OUT OF THIS FOREST! THEY SAID IT'S THE LAIR OF DIABLO--WHATEVER THAT MEANS!!
REED, WE'VE BEEN LOST FOR HOURS NOW... IT WILL BE GETTING DARK SOON!
X-730
1

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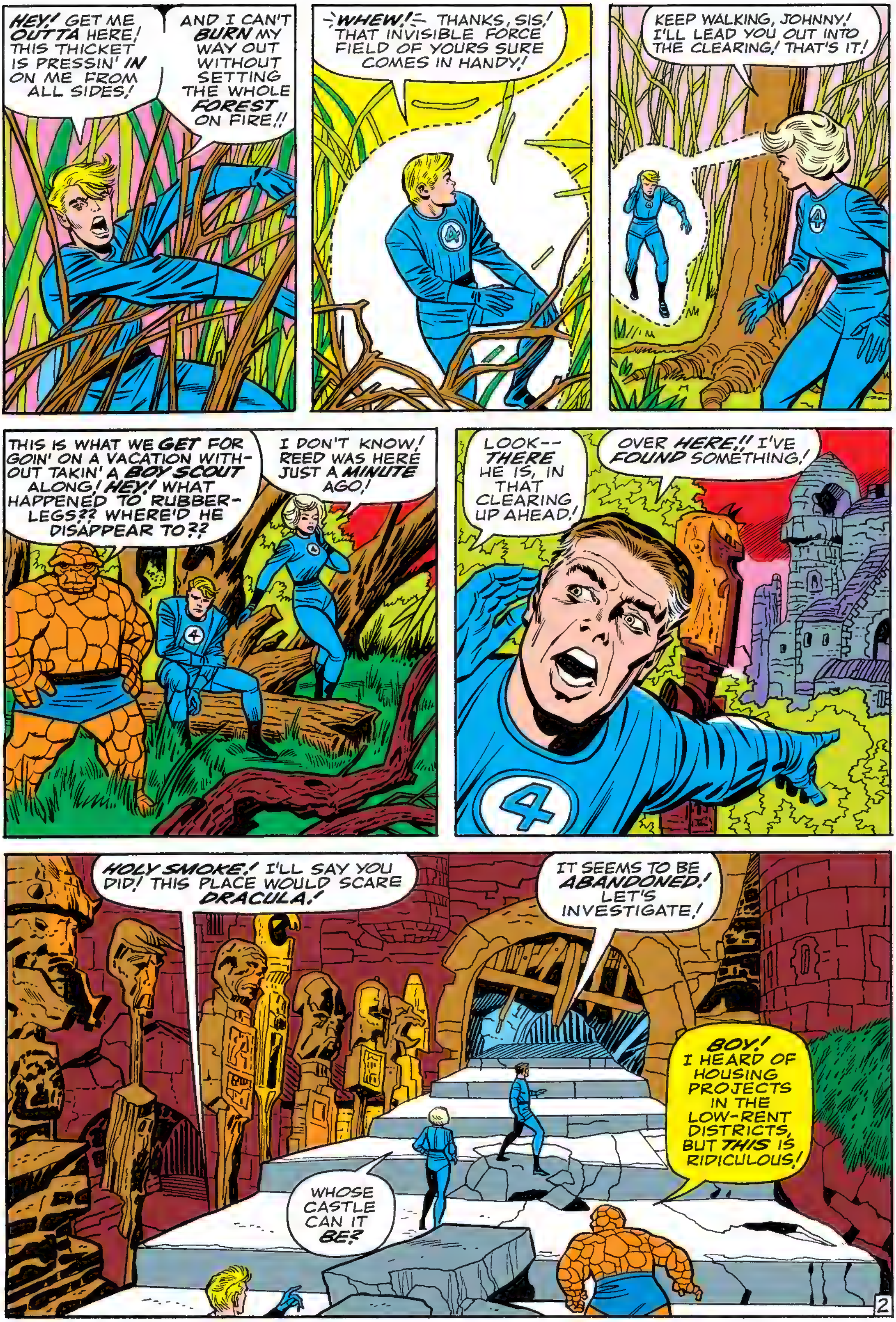
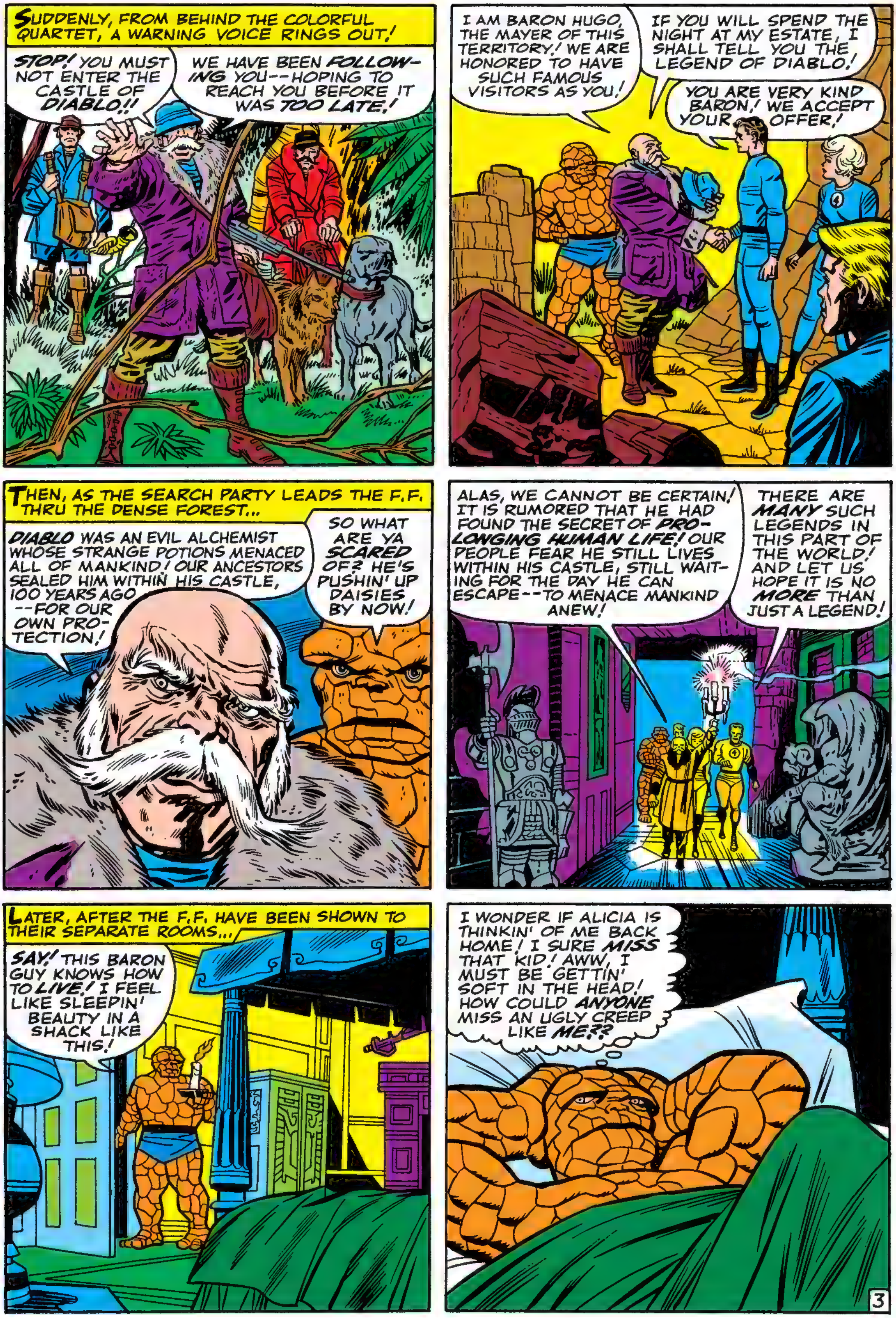
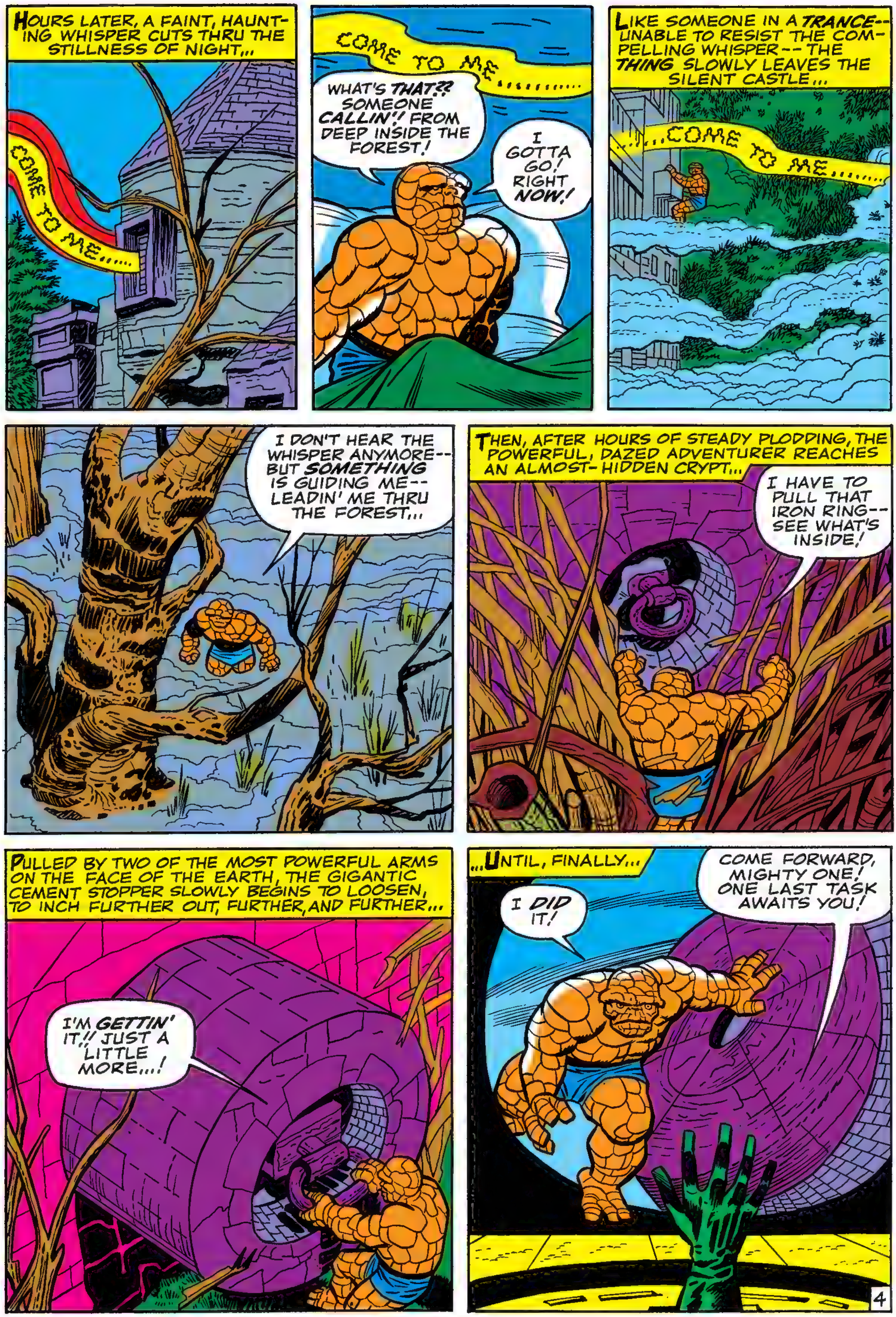
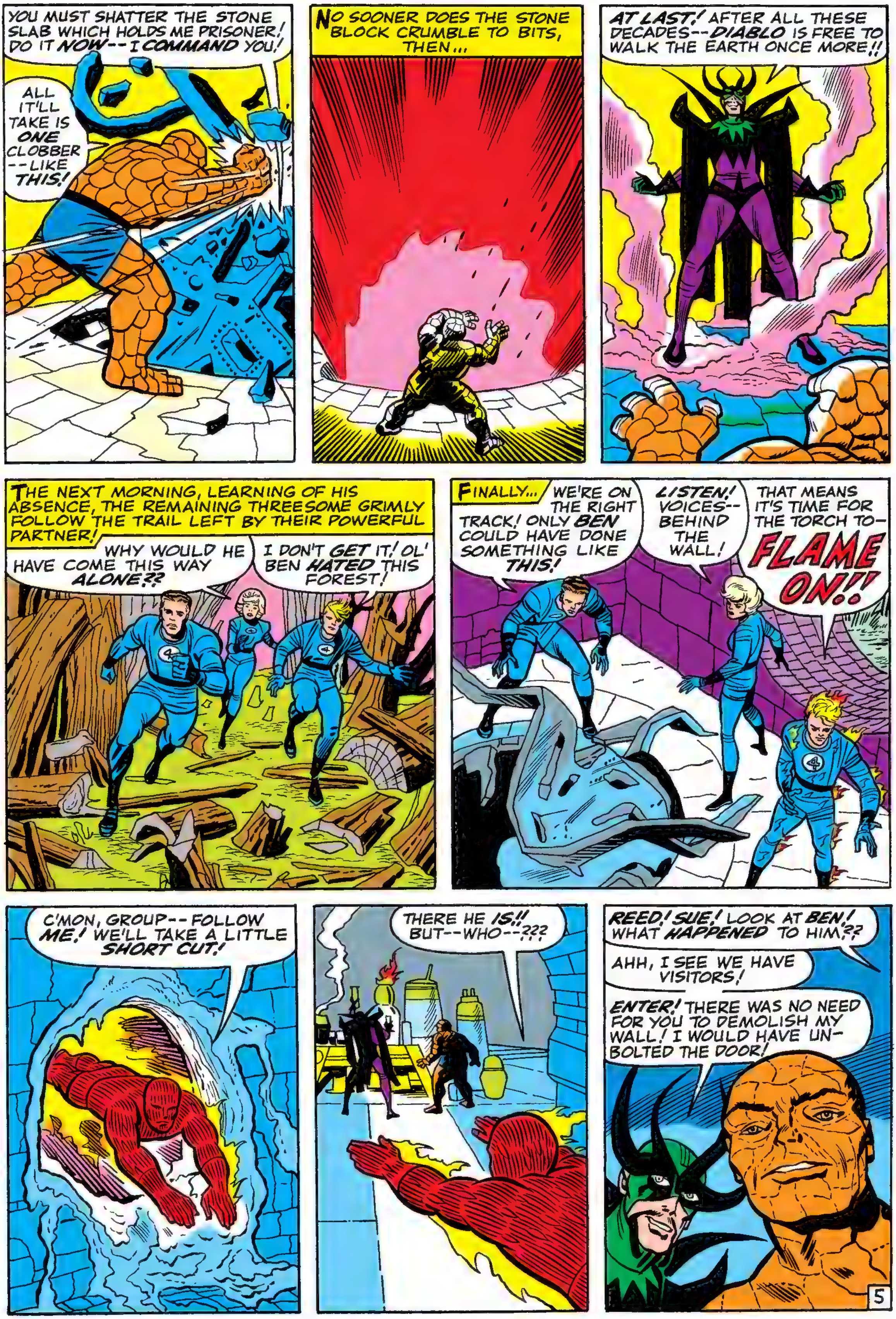
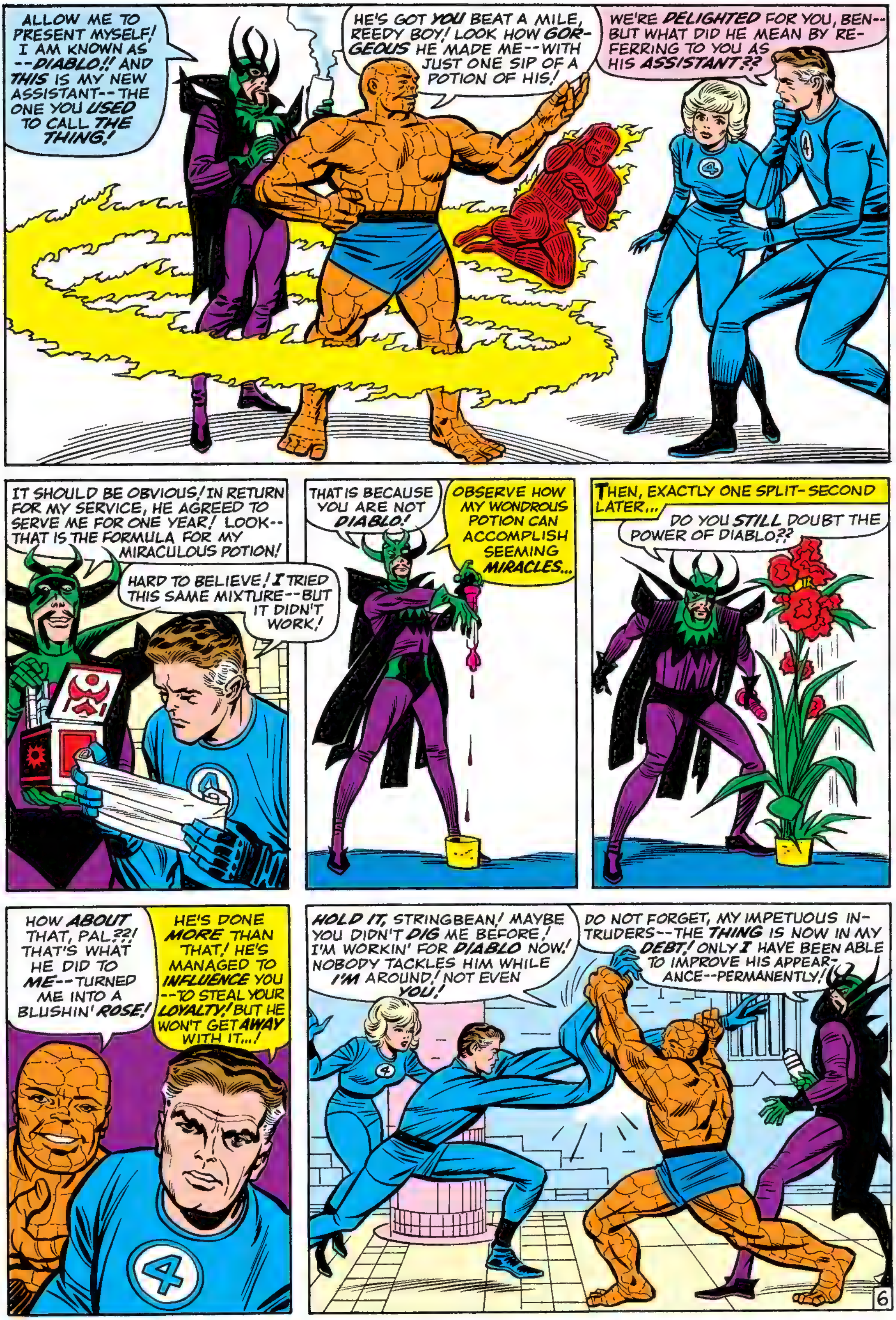
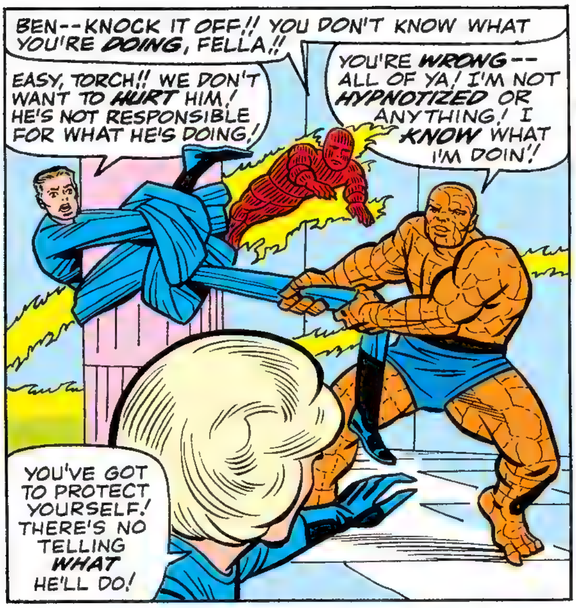

HEY! GET ME OUTTA HERE! THIS THICKET IS PRESSIN' IN ON ME FROM ALL SIDES!
AND I CAN'T BURN MY WAY OUT WITHOUT SETTING THE WHOLE FOREST ON FIRE!!
WHEW! THANKS, SIS! THAT INVISIBLE FORCE FIELD OF YOURS SURE COMES IN HANDY!
KEEP WALKING, JOHNNY! I'LL LEAD YOU OUT INTO THE CLEARING! THAT'S IT!
THIS IS WHAT WE GET FOR GOIN' ON A VACATION WITHOUT TAKIN' A BOY SCOUT ALONG! HEY! WHAT HAPPENED TO RUBBER-LEGS?? WHERE'D HE DISAPPEAR TO??
I DON'T KNOW! REED WAS HERE JUST A MINUTE AGO!
LOOK-- THERE HE IS, IN THAT CLEARING UP AHEAD!
OVER HERE!! I'VE FOUND SOMETHING!
HOLY SMOKE! I'LL SAY YOU DID! THIS PLACE WOULD SCARE DRACULA!
IT SEEMS TO BE ABANDONED! LET'S INVESTIGATE!
BOY! I HEARD OF HOUSING PROJECTS IN THE LOW-RENT DISTRICTS, BUT THIS IS RIDICULOUS!
WHOSE CASTLE CAN IT BE?

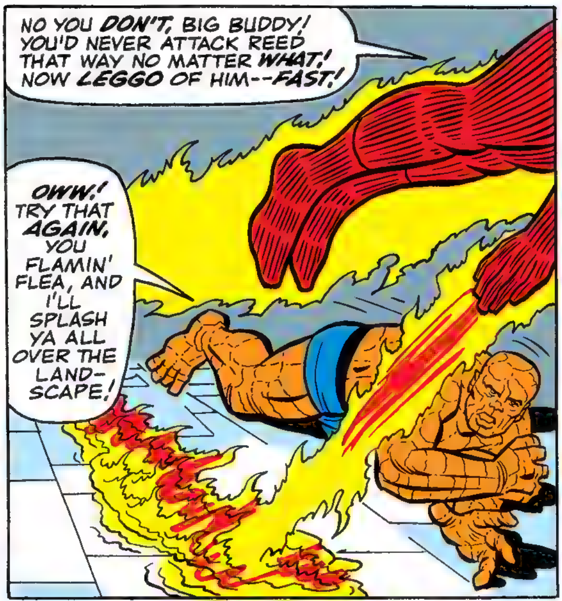

SUDDENLY, FROM BEHIND THE COLORFUL QUARTET, A WARNING VOICE RINGS OUT!
STOP! YOU MUST NOT ENTER THE CASTLE OF DIABLO!!
WE HAVE BEEN FOLLOWING YOU--HOPING TO REACH YOU BEFORE IT WAS TOO LATE!
I AM BARON HUGO, THE MAYER OF THIS TERRITORY! WE ARE HONORED TO HAVE SUCH FAMOUS VISITORS AS YOU!
IF YOU WILL SPEND THE NIGHT AT MY ESTATE, I SHALL TELL YOU THE LEGEND OF DIABLO!
YOU ARE VERY KIND BARON! WE ACCEPT YOUR OFFER!
THEN, AS THE SEARCH PARTY LEADS THE F.F. THRU THE DENSE FOREST...
DIABLO WAS AN EVIL ALCHEMIST WHOSE STRANGE POTIONS MENACED ALL OF MANKIND! OUR ANCESTORS SEALED HIM WITHIN HIS CASTLE, 100 YEARS AGO --FOR OUR OWN PROTECTION!
SO WHAT ARE YA SCARED OF? HE'S PUSHIN' UP DAISIES BY NOW!
ALAS, WE CANNOT BE CERTAIN! IT IS RUMORED THAT HE HAD FOUND THE SECRET OF PROLONGING HUMAN LIFE! OUR PEOPLE FEAR HE STILL LIVES WITHIN HIS CASTLE, STILL WAITING FOR THE DAY HE CAN ESCAPE--TO MENACE MANKIND ANEW!
THERE ARE MANY SUCH LEGENDS IN THIS PART OF THE WORLD! AND LET US HOPE IT IS NO MORE THAN JUST A LEGEND!
LATER, AFTER THE F.F. HAVE BEEN SHOWN TO THEIR SEPARATE ROOMS...
SAY! THIS BARON GUY KNOWS HOW TO LIVE! I FEEL LIKE SLEEPIN' BEAUTY IN A SHACK LIKE THIS!
I WONDER IF ALICIA IS THINKIN' OF ME BACK HOME! I SURE MISS THAT KID! AWW, I MUST BE GETTIN' SOFT IN THE HEAD! HOW COULD ANYONE MISS AN UGLY CREEP LIKE ME??

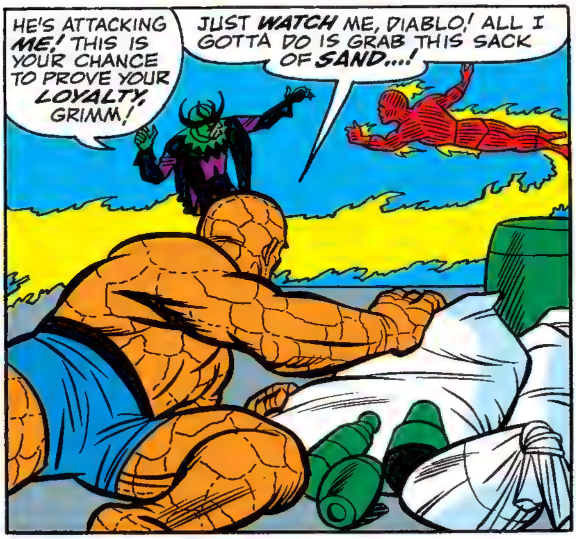

HOURS LATER, A FAINT, HAUNTING WHISPER CUTS THRU THE STILLNESS OF NIGHT...
COME TO ME......
COME TO ME..........
WHAT'S *THAT??* SOMEONE *CALLIN'!* FROM DEEP INSIDE THE FOREST!
I GOTTA GO! RIGHT *NOW!*
LIKE SOMEONE IN A *TRANCE*-- UNABLE TO RESIST THE COMPELLING WHISPER -- THE *THING* SLOWLY LEAVES THE SILENT CASTLE...
...COME TO ME.......
I DON'T HEAR THE WHISPER ANYMORE-- BUT *SOMETHING* IS GUIDING ME-- LEADIN' ME THRU THE FOREST...
THEN, AFTER HOURS OF STEADY PLODDING, THE POWERFUL, DAZED ADVENTURER REACHES AN ALMOST-HIDDEN CRYPT...
I HAVE TO PULL THAT IRON RING-- SEE WHAT'S INSIDE!
PULLED BY TWO OF THE MOST POWERFUL ARMS ON THE FACE OF THE EARTH, THE GIGANTIC CEMENT STOPPER SLOWLY BEGINS TO LOOSEN, TO INCH FURTHER OUT, FURTHER, AND FURTHER...
I'M *GETTIN'* IT!! JUST A LITTLE MORE...!
...UNTIL, FINALLY...
I *DID* IT!
COME FORWARD, MIGHTY ONE! ONE LAST TASK AWAITS YOU!

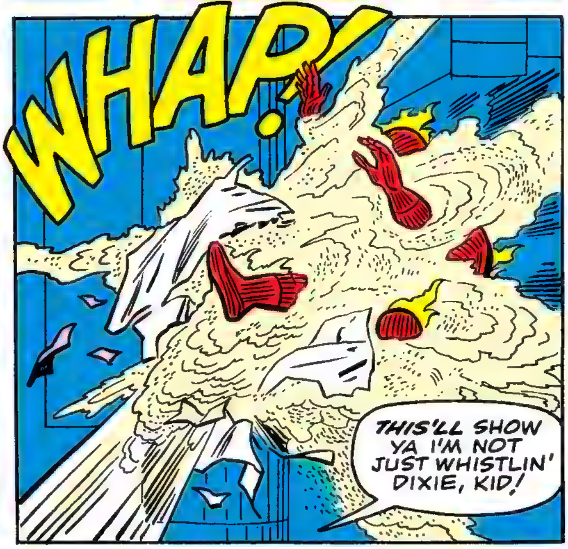

YOU MUST SHATTER THE STONE SLAB WHICH HOLDS ME PRISONER! DO IT NOW--I COMMAND YOU!
ALL IT'LL TAKE IS ONE CLOBBER--LIKE THIS!
NO SOONER DOES THE STONE BLOCK CRUMBLE TO BITS, THEN...
AT LAST! AFTER ALL THESE DECADES--DIABLO IS FREE TO WALK THE EARTH ONCE MORE!!
THE NEXT MORNING, LEARNING OF HIS ABSENCE, THE REMAINING THREESOME GRIMLY FOLLOW THE TRAIL LEFT BY THEIR POWERFUL PARTNER!
WHY WOULD HE HAVE COME THIS WAY ALONE??
I DON'T GET IT! OL' BEN HATED THIS FOREST!
FINALLY...
WE'RE ON THE RIGHT TRACK! ONLY BEN COULD HAVE DONE SOMETHING LIKE THIS!
LISTEN! VOICES--BEHIND THE WALL!
THAT MEANS IT'S TIME FOR THE TORCH TO--FLAME ON!!
C'MON, GROUP--FOLLOW ME! WE'LL TAKE A LITTLE SHORT CUT!
THERE HE IS!! BUT--WHO--???
REED! SUE! LOOK AT BEN! WHAT HAPPENED TO HIM??
AHH, I SEE WE HAVE VISITORS!
ENTER! THERE WAS NO NEED FOR YOU TO DEMOLISH MY WALL! I WOULD HAVE UNBOLTED THE DOOR!

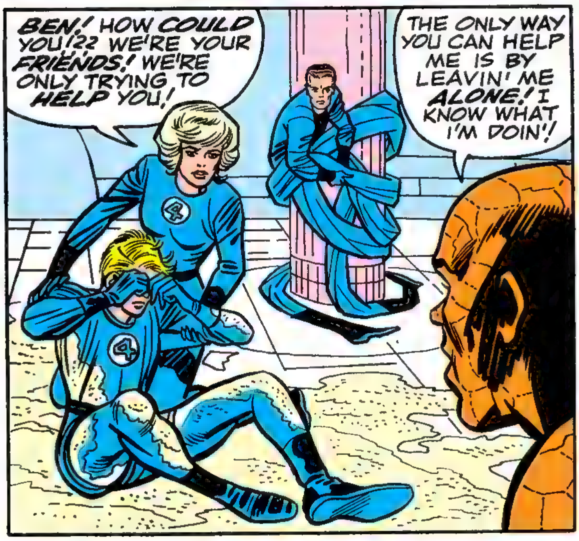

ALLOW ME TO PRESENT MYSELF! I AM KNOWN AS --*DIABLO!!* AND *THIS* IS MY NEW ASSISTANT-- THE ONE YOU *USED* TO CALL *THE THING!*
HE'S GOT *YOU* BEAT A MILE, REEDY BOY! LOOK HOW *GORGEOUS* HE MADE ME--WITH JUST ONE SIP OF A POTION OF HIS!
WE'RE *DELIGHTED* FOR YOU, BEN--BUT WHAT DID HE MEAN BY REFERRING TO YOU AS HIS *ASSISTANT??*
IT SHOULD BE OBVIOUS! IN RETURN FOR MY SERVICE, HE AGREED TO SERVE ME FOR ONE YEAR! LOOK--THAT IS THE FORMULA FOR MY MIRACULOUS POTION!
HARD TO BELIEVE! *I* TRIED THIS SAME MIXTURE--BUT IT DIDN'T WORK!
THAT IS BECAUSE YOU ARE NOT *DIABLO!*
OBSERVE HOW MY WONDROUS POTION CAN ACCOMPLISH SEEMING *MIRACLES...*
THEN, EXACTLY ONE SPLIT-SECOND LATER...
DO YOU *STILL* DOUBT THE POWER OF DIABLO??
HOW *ABOUT* THAT, PAL??! THAT'S WHAT HE DID TO *ME*--TURNED ME INTO A BLUSHIN' *ROSE!*
HE'S DONE *MORE* THAN THAT! HE'S MANAGED TO *INFLUENCE* YOU --TO STEAL YOUR *LOYALTY!* BUT HE WON'T GET *AWAY* WITH IT...!
HOLD IT, STRINGBEAN! MAYBE YOU DIDN'T *DIG* ME BEFORE! I'M WORKIN' FOR *DIABLO* NOW! NOBODY TACKLES HIM WHILE *I'M* AROUND! NOT EVEN *YOU!*
DO NOT FORGET, MY IMPETUOUS INTRUDERS--THE *THING* IS NOW IN MY *DEBT!* ONLY *I* HAVE BEEN ABLE TO IMPROVE HIS APPEARANCE--PERMANENTLY!

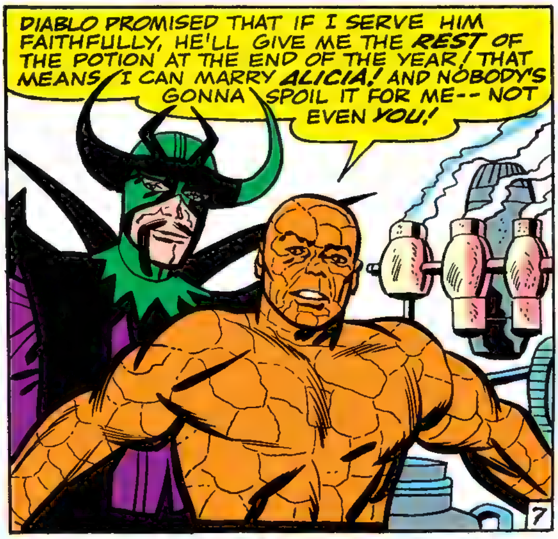

BEN--KNOCK IT OFF!! YOU DON'T KNOW WHAT YOU'RE **DOING**, FELLA!!
EASY, TORCH!! WE DON'T WANT TO **HURT** HIM! HE'S NOT RESPONSIBLE FOR WHAT HE'S DOING!
YOU'RE **WRONG**-- ALL OF YA! I'M NOT **HYPNOTIZED** OR ANYTHING! I **KNOW** WHAT I'M DOIN'!
YOU'VE GOT TO PROTECT YOURSELF! THERE'S NO TELLING **WHAT** HE'LL DO!

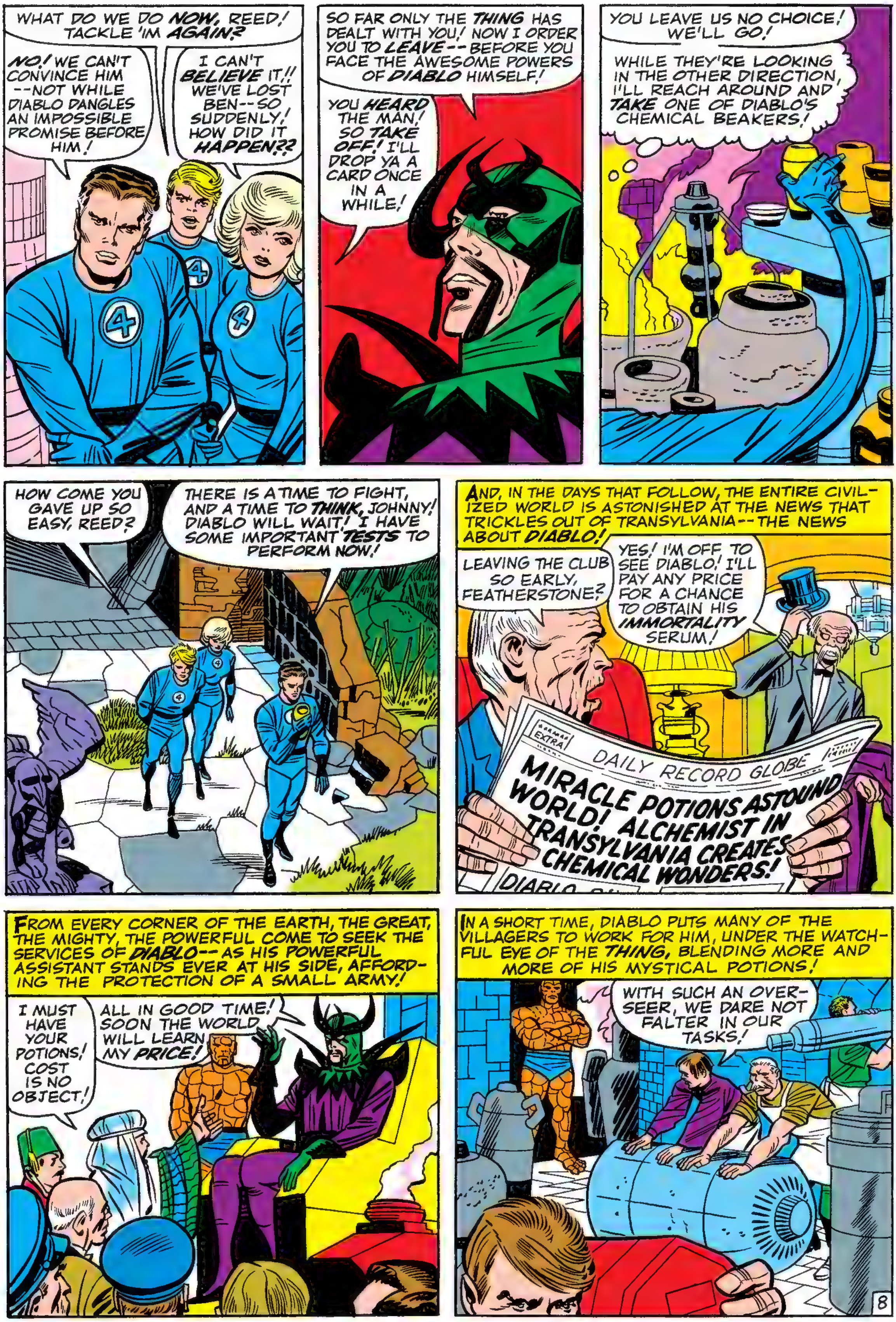

NO YOU **DON'T**, BIG BUDDY! YOU'D NEVER ATTACK REED THAT WAY NO MATTER **WHAT!** NOW **LEGGO** OF HIM--**FAST!**
OWW! TRY THAT **AGAIN**, YOU FLAMIN' FLEA, AND I'LL SPLASH YA ALL OVER THE LANDSCAPE!

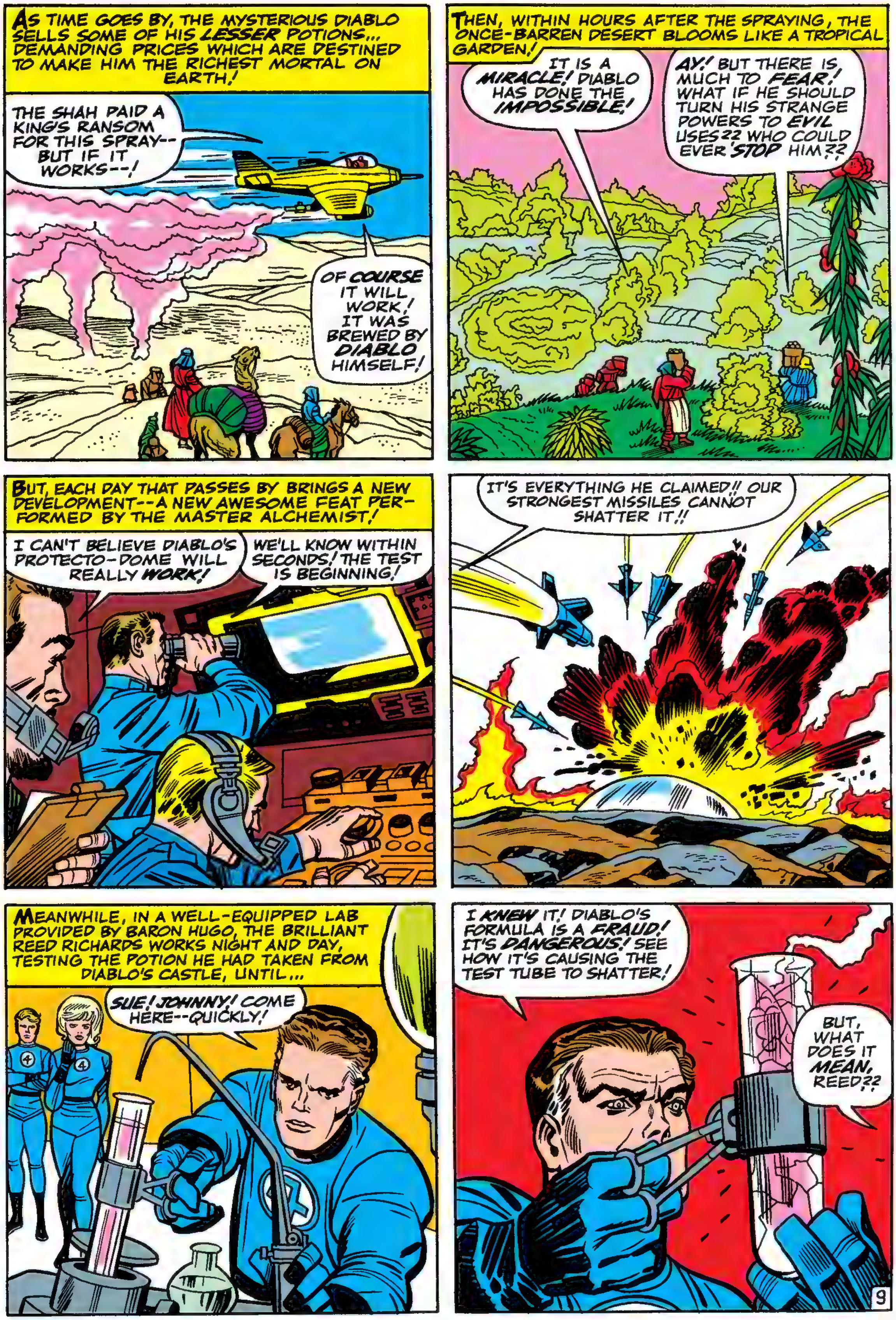

HE'S ATTACKING **ME!** THIS IS YOUR CHANCE TO PROVE YOUR **LOYALTY**, GRIMM!
JUST **WATCH** ME, DIABLO! ALL I GOTTA DO IS GRAB THIS SACK OF **SAND**...!

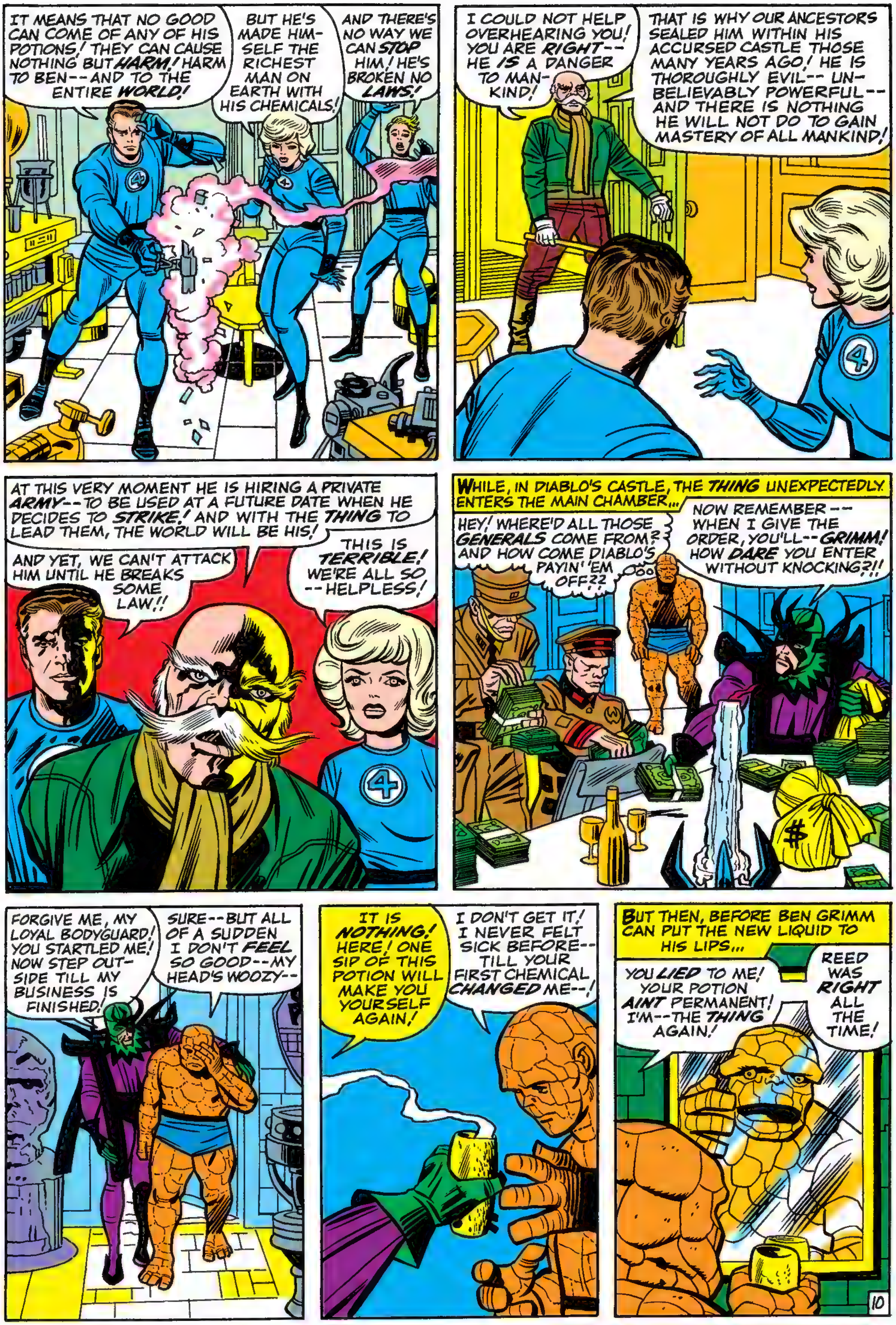

WHAP!
THIS'LL SHOW YA I'M NOT JUST WHISTLIN' DIXIE, KID!

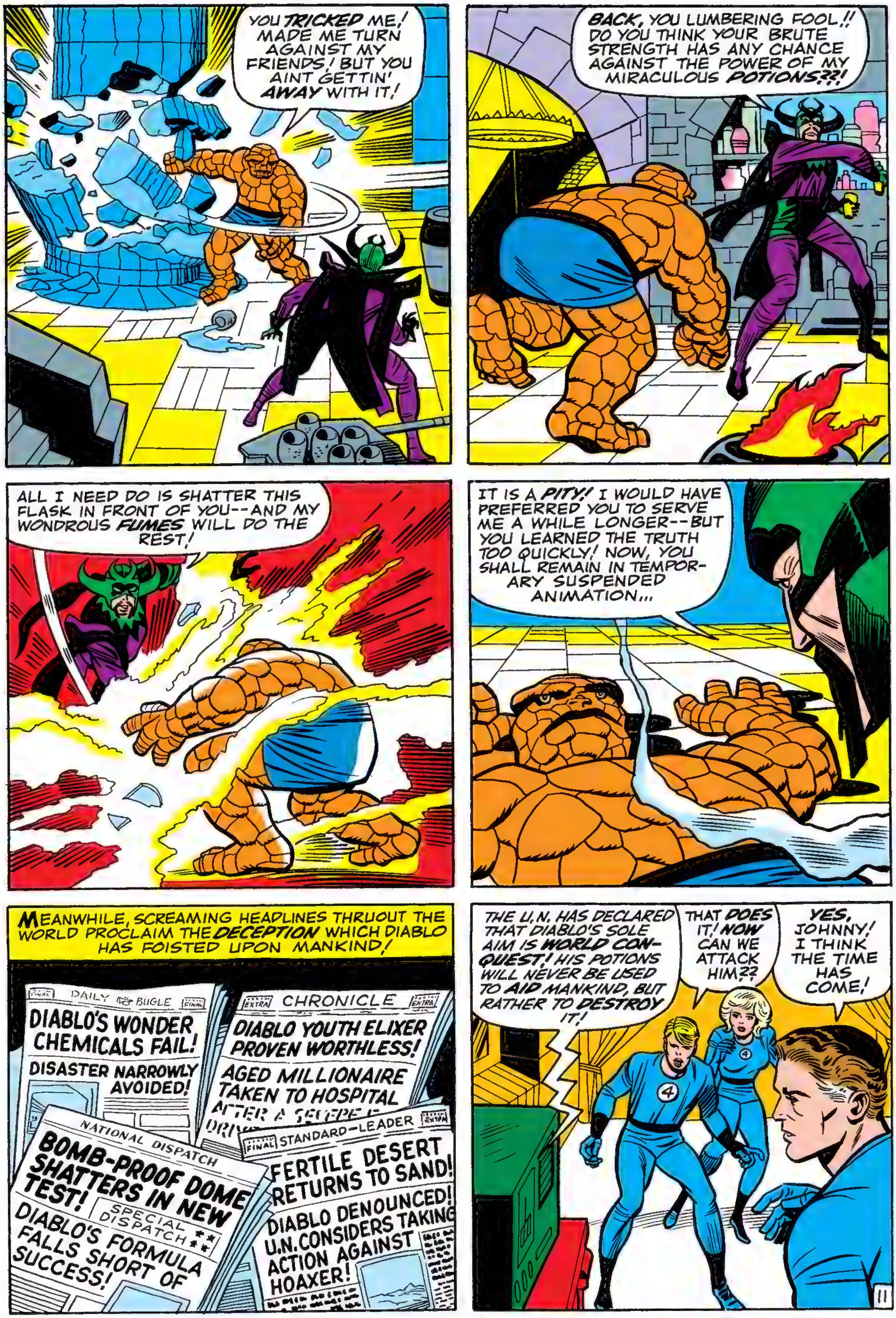

BEN! HOW **COULD** YOU!?? WE'RE YOUR **FRIENDS!** WE'RE ONLY TRYING TO **HELP** YOU!
THE ONLY WAY YOU CAN HELP ME IS BY LEAVIN' ME **ALONE!** I KNOW WHAT I'M DOIN'!

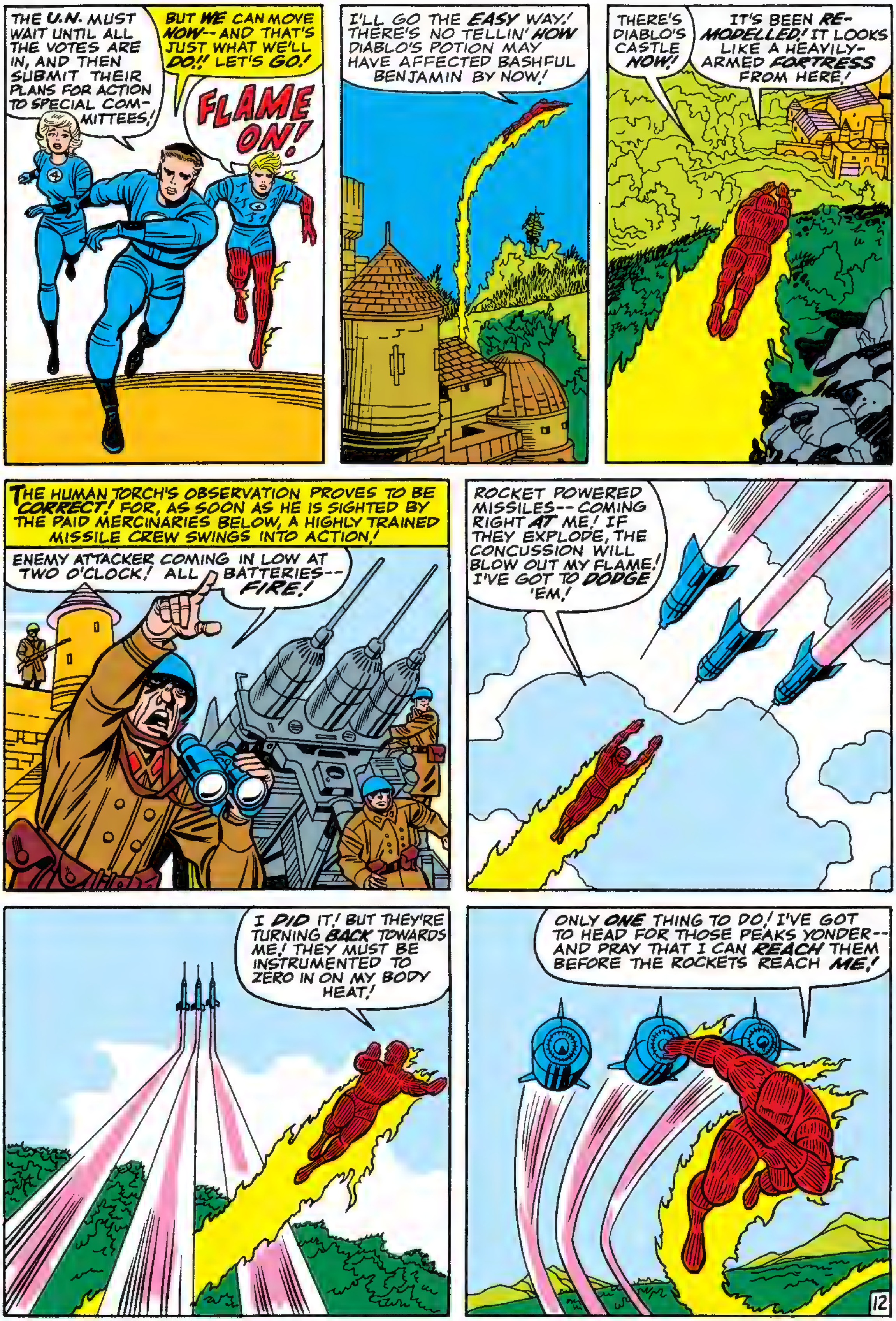

DIABLO PROMISED THAT IF I SERVE HIM FAITHFULLY, HE'LL GIVE ME THE **REST** OF THE POTION AT THE END OF THE YEAR! THAT MEANS I CAN MARRY **ALICIA!** AND NOBODY'S GONNA SPOIL IT FOR ME-- NOT EVEN **YOU!**

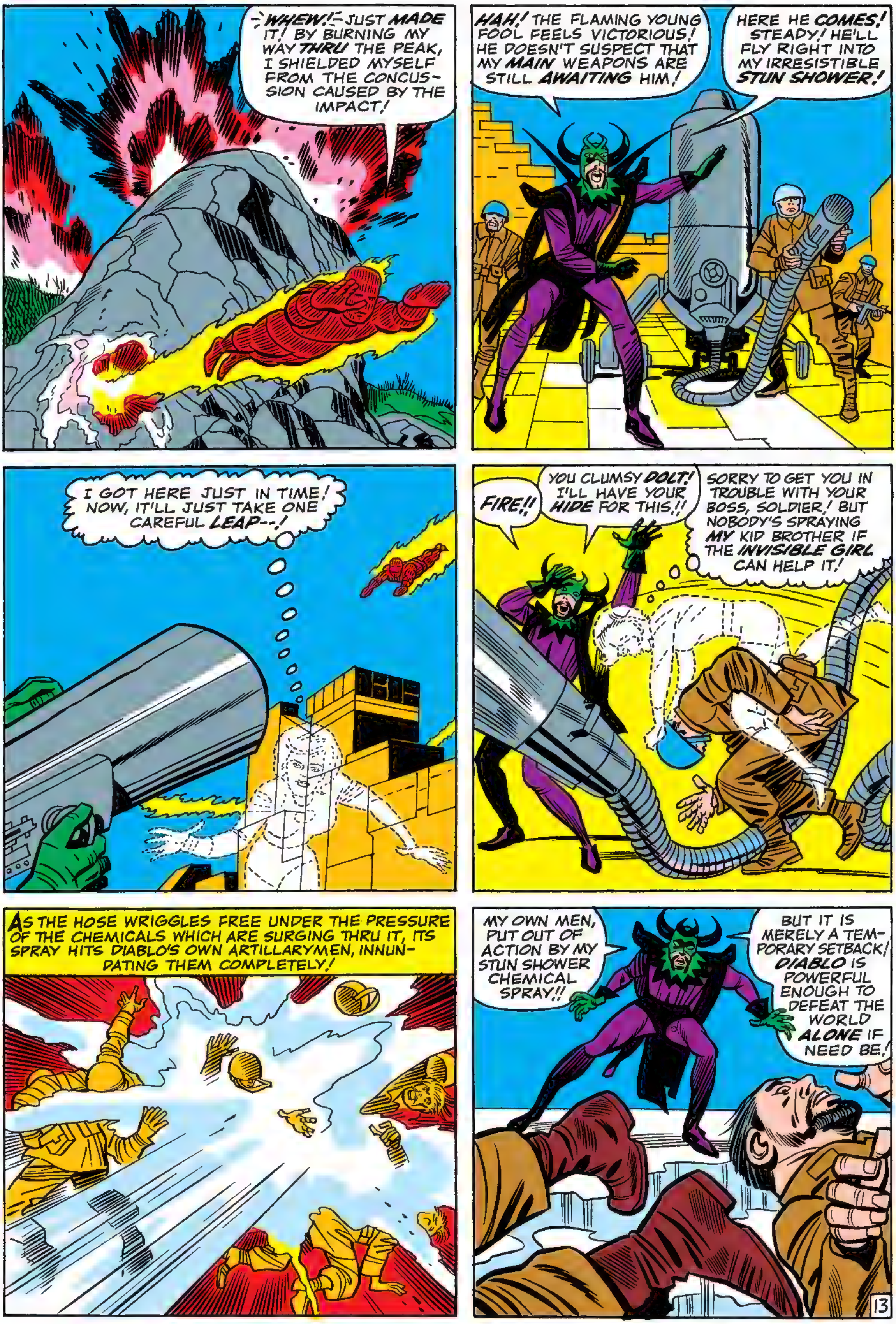

WHAT DO WE DO NOW, REED! TACKLE 'IM AGAIN?
NO! WE CAN'T CONVINCE HIM --NOT WHILE DIABLO DANGLES AN IMPOSSIBLE PROMISE BEFORE HIM!
I CAN'T BELIEVE IT!! WE'VE LOST BEN--SO SUDDENLY! HOW DID IT HAPPEN??
SO FAR ONLY THE THING HAS DEALT WITH YOU! NOW I ORDER YOU TO LEAVE--BEFORE YOU FACE THE AWESOME POWERS OF DIABLO HIMSELF!
YOU HEARD THE MAN! SO TAKE OFF! I'LL DROP YA A CARD ONCE IN A WHILE!
YOU LEAVE US NO CHOICE! WE'LL GO!
WHILE THEY'RE LOOKING IN THE OTHER DIRECTION, I'LL REACH AROUND AND TAKE ONE OF DIABLO'S CHEMICAL BEAKERS!
HOW COME YOU GAVE UP SO EASY, REED?
THERE IS A TIME TO FIGHT, AND A TIME TO THINK, JOHNNY! DIABLO WILL WAIT! I HAVE SOME IMPORTANT TESTS TO PERFORM NOW!
AND, IN THE DAYS THAT FOLLOW, THE ENTIRE CIVILIZED WORLD IS ASTONISHED AT THE NEWS THAT TRICKLES OUT OF TRANSYLVANIA--THE NEWS ABOUT DIABLO!
LEAVING THE CLUB SO EARLY, FEATHERSTONE?
YES! I'M OFF TO SEE DIABLO! I'LL PAY ANY PRICE FOR A CHANCE TO OBTAIN HIS IMMORTALITY SERUM!
EXTRA
DAILY RECORD GLOBE
MIRACLE POTIONS ASTOUND WORLD! ALCHEMIST IN TRANSYLVANIA CREATES CHEMICAL WONDERS!
DIABLO
FROM EVERY CORNER OF THE EARTH, THE GREAT, THE MIGHTY, THE POWERFUL COME TO SEEK THE SERVICES OF DIABLO--AS HIS POWERFUL ASSISTANT STANDS EVER AT HIS SIDE, AFFORDING THE PROTECTION OF A SMALL ARMY!
I MUST HAVE YOUR POTIONS! COST IS NO OBJECT!
ALL IN GOOD TIME! SOON THE WORLD WILL LEARN MY PRICE!
IN A SHORT TIME, DIABLO PUTS MANY OF THE VILLAGERS TO WORK FOR HIM, UNDER THE WATCHFUL EYE OF THE THING, BLENDING MORE AND MORE OF HIS MYSTICAL POTIONS!
WITH SUCH AN OVERSEER, WE DARE NOT FALTER IN OUR TASKS!

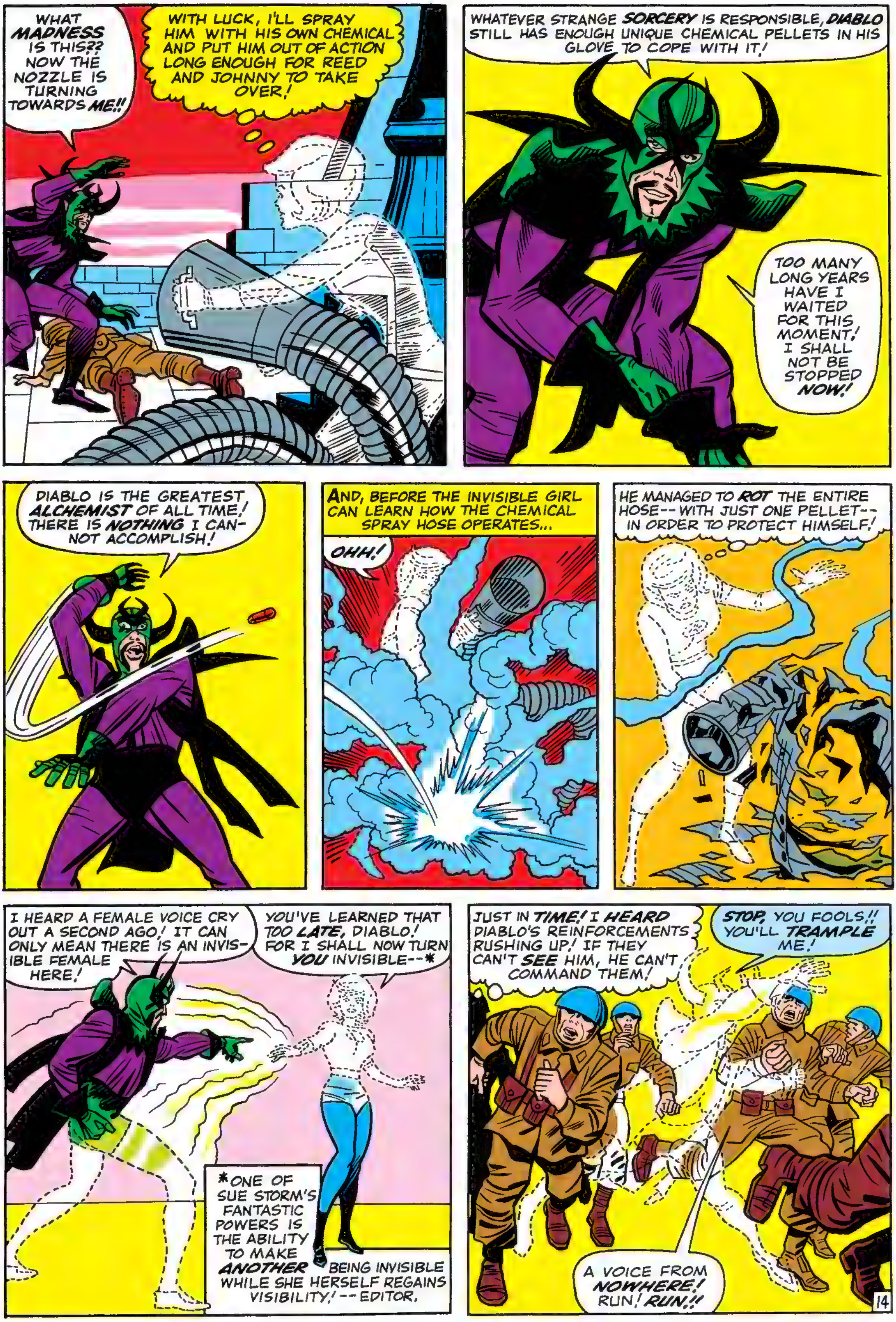

AS TIME GOES BY, THE MYSTERIOUS DIABLO SELLS SOME OF HIS *LESSER* POTIONS... DEMANDING PRICES WHICH ARE DESTINED TO MAKE HIM THE RICHEST MORTAL ON EARTH!
THE SHAH PAID A KING'S RANSOM FOR THIS SPRAY-- BUT IF IT WORKS--!
OF *COURSE* IT WILL WORK! IT WAS BREWED BY *DIABLO* HIMSELF!
THEN, WITHIN HOURS AFTER THE SPRAYING, THE ONCE-BARREN DESERT BLOOMS LIKE A TROPICAL GARDEN!
IT IS A *MIRACLE!* DIABLO HAS DONE THE *IMPOSSIBLE!*
AY! BUT THERE IS MUCH TO *FEAR!* WHAT IF HE SHOULD TURN HIS STRANGE POWERS TO *EVIL* USES?? WHO COULD EVER *STOP* HIM??
BUT, EACH DAY THAT PASSES BY BRINGS A NEW DEVELOPMENT--A NEW AWESOME FEAT PERFORMED BY THE MASTER ALCHEMIST!
I CAN'T BELIEVE DIABLO'S PROTECTO-DOME WILL REALLY *WORK!*
WE'LL KNOW WITHIN SECONDS! THE TEST IS BEGINNING!
IT'S EVERYTHING HE CLAIMED!! OUR STRONGEST MISSILES CANNOT SHATTER IT!!
MEANWHILE, IN A WELL-EQUIPPED LAB PROVIDED BY BARON HUGO, THE BRILLIANT REED RICHARDS WORKS NIGHT AND DAY, TESTING THE POTION HE HAD TAKEN FROM DIABLO'S CASTLE, UNTIL...
SUE! JOHNNY! COME HERE--QUICKLY!
I *KNEW* IT! DIABLO'S FORMULA IS A *FRAUD!* IT'S *DANGEROUS!* SEE HOW IT'S CAUSING THE TEST TUBE TO SHATTER!
BUT, WHAT DOES IT *MEAN,* REED??

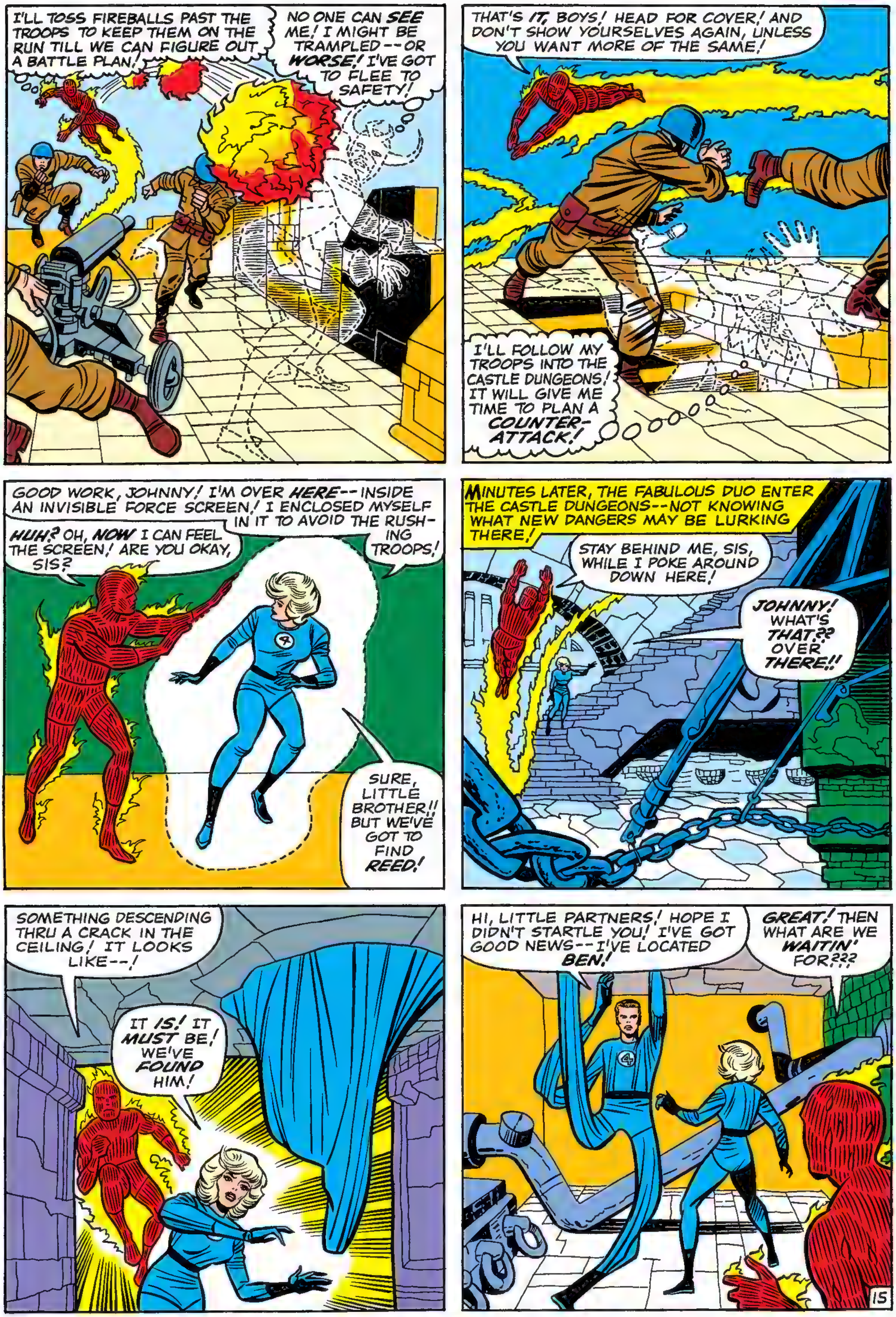

IT MEANS THAT NO GOOD CAN COME OF ANY OF HIS POTIONS! THEY CAN CAUSE NOTHING BUT *HARM!* HARM TO BEN--AND TO THE ENTIRE *WORLD!*
BUT HE'S MADE HIMSELF THE RICHEST MAN ON EARTH WITH HIS CHEMICALS!
AND THERE'S NO WAY WE CAN *STOP* HIM! HE'S BROKEN NO *LAWS!*
I COULD NOT HELP OVERHEARING YOU! YOU ARE *RIGHT*--HE *IS* A DANGER TO MANKIND!
THAT IS WHY OUR ANCESTORS SEALED HIM WITHIN HIS ACCURSED CASTLE THOSE MANY YEARS AGO! HE IS THOROUGHLY EVIL--UNBELIEVABLY POWERFUL--AND THERE IS NOTHING HE WILL NOT DO TO GAIN MASTERY OF ALL MANKIND!
AT THIS VERY MOMENT HE IS HIRING A PRIVATE *ARMY*--TO BE USED AT A FUTURE DATE WHEN HE DECIDES TO *STRIKE!* AND WITH THE *THING* TO LEAD THEM, THE WORLD WILL BE HIS!
AND YET, WE CAN'T ATTACK HIM UNTIL HE BREAKS SOME LAW!!
THIS IS *TERRIBLE!* WE'RE ALL SO--HELPLESS!
WHILE, IN DIABLO'S CASTLE, THE *THING* UNEXPECTEDLY ENTERS THE MAIN CHAMBER...
HEY! WHERE'D ALL THOSE *GENERALS* COME FROM?? AND HOW COME DIABLO'S PAYIN' 'EM OFF??
NOW REMEMBER--WHEN I GIVE THE ORDER, YOU'LL--*GRIMM!* HOW *DARE* YOU ENTER WITHOUT KNOCKING?!!
FORGIVE ME, MY LOYAL BODYGUARD! YOU STARTLED ME! NOW STEP OUTSIDE TILL MY BUSINESS IS FINISHED!
SURE--BUT ALL OF A SUDDEN I DON'T *FEEL* SO GOOD--MY HEAD'S WOOZY--
IT IS *NOTHING!* HERE! ONE SIP OF THIS POTION WILL MAKE YOU YOURSELF AGAIN!
I DON'T GET IT! I NEVER FELT SICK BEFORE--TILL YOUR FIRST CHEMICAL *CHANGED* ME--!
BUT THEN, BEFORE BEN GRIMM CAN PUT THE NEW LIQUID TO HIS LIPS...
YOU *LIED* TO ME! YOUR POTION *AIN'T* PERMANENT! I'M--THE *THING* AGAIN!
REED WAS *RIGHT* ALL THE TIME!

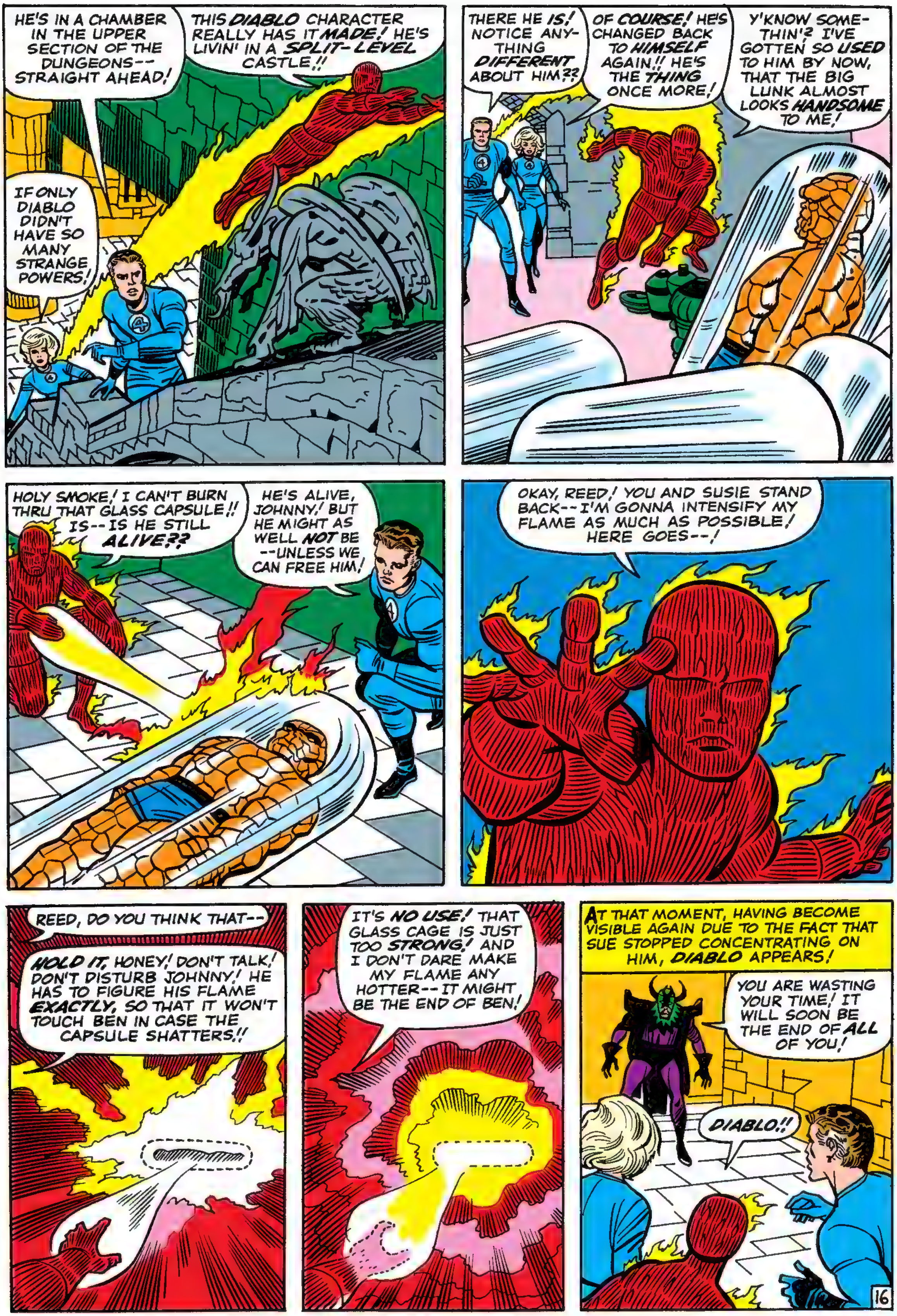

YOU TRICKED ME! MADE ME TURN AGAINST MY FRIENDS! BUT YOU AINT GETTIN' AWAY WITH IT!
BACK, YOU LUMBERING FOOL!! DO YOU THINK YOUR BRUTE STRENGTH HAS ANY CHANCE AGAINST THE POWER OF MY MIRACULOUS POTIONS??!
ALL I NEED DO IS SHATTER THIS FLASK IN FRONT OF YOU--AND MY WONDROUS FUMES WILL DO THE REST!
IT IS A PITY! I WOULD HAVE PREFERRED YOU TO SERVE ME A WHILE LONGER--BUT YOU LEARNED THE TRUTH TOO QUICKLY! NOW, YOU SHALL REMAIN IN TEMPORARY SUSPENDED ANIMATION...
MEANWHILE, SCREAMING HEADLINES THRUOUT THE WORLD PROCLAIM THE DECEPTION WHICH DIABLO HAS FOISTED UPON MANKIND!
FINAL DAILY BUGLE FINAL
DIABLO'S WONDER CHEMICALS FAIL!
DISASTER NARROWLY AVOIDED!
EXTRA CHRONICLE EXTRA
DIABLO YOUTH ELIXER PROVEN WORTHLESS!
AGED MILLIONAIRE TAKEN TO HOSPITAL AFTER A SEVERE
DRI
NATIONAL DISPATCH
BOMB-PROOF DOME SHATTERS IN NEW TEST!
SPECIAL DISPATCH
DIABLO'S FORMULA FALLS SHORT OF SUCCESS!
FINAL STANDARD-LEADER EXTRA
FERTILE DESERT RETURNS TO SAND!
DIABLO DENOUNCED! U.N. CONSIDERS TAKING ACTION AGAINST HOAXER!
THE U.N. HAS DECLARED THAT DIABLO'S SOLE AIM IS WORLD CONQUEST! HIS POTIONS WILL NEVER BE USED TO AID MANKIND, BUT RATHER TO DESTROY IT!
THAT DOES IT! NOW CAN WE ATTACK HIM??
YES, JOHNNY! I THINK THE TIME HAS COME!

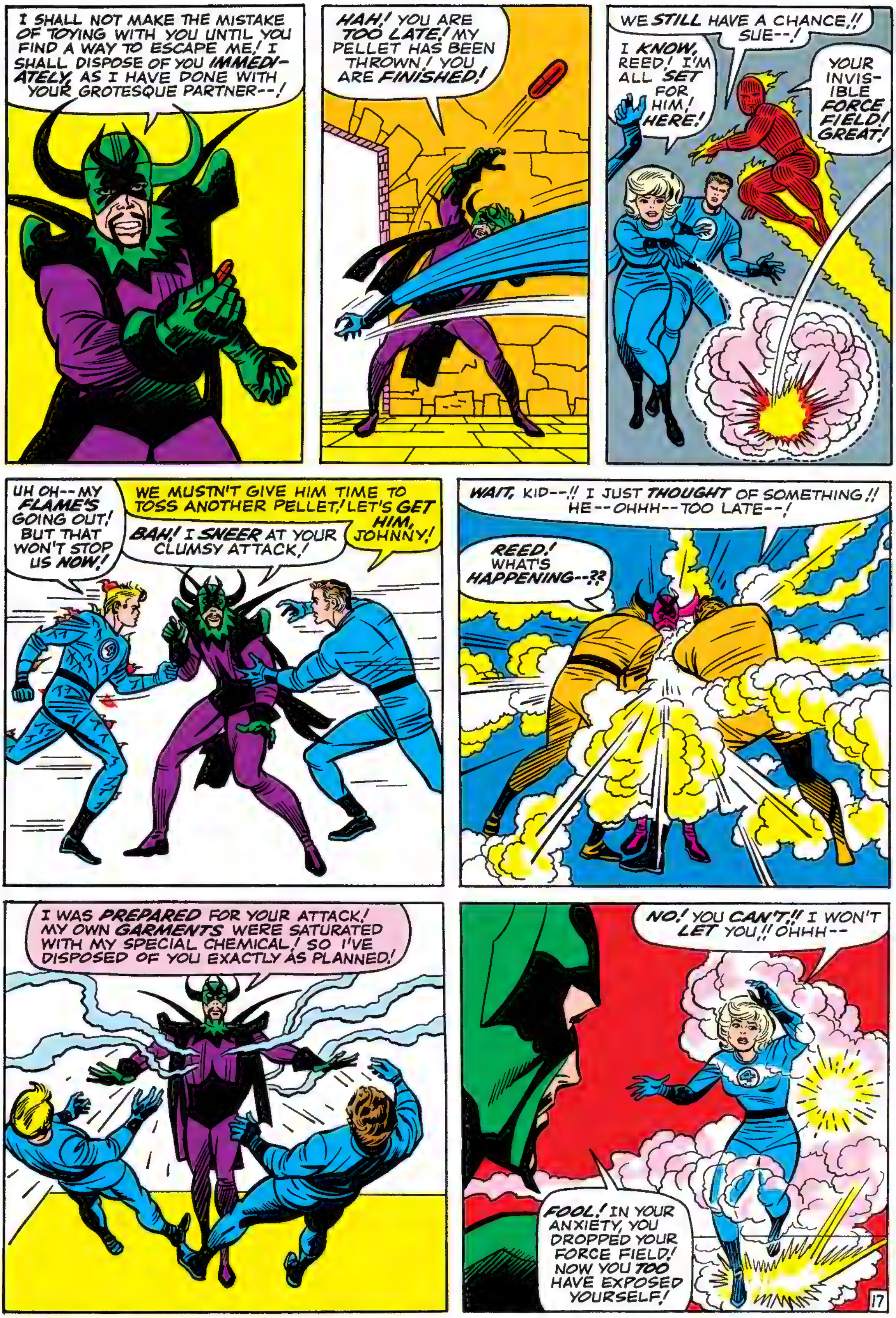

THE U.N. MUST WAIT UNTIL ALL THE VOTES ARE IN, AND THEN SUBMIT THEIR PLANS FOR ACTION TO SPECIAL COMMITTEES!
BUT WE CAN MOVE NOW-- AND THAT'S JUST WHAT WE'LL DO!! LET'S GO!
FLAME ON!
I'LL GO THE EASY WAY! THERE'S NO TELLIN' HOW DIABLO'S POTION MAY HAVE AFFECTED BASHFUL BENJAMIN BY NOW!
THERE'S DIABLO'S CASTLE NOW!
IT'S BEEN RE-MODELLED! IT LOOKS LIKE A HEAVILY-ARMED FORTRESS FROM HERE!
THE HUMAN TORCH'S OBSERVATION PROVES TO BE CORRECT! FOR, AS SOON AS HE IS SIGHTED BY THE PAID MERCINARIES BELOW, A HIGHLY TRAINED MISSILE CREW SWINGS INTO ACTION!
ENEMY ATTACKER COMING IN LOW AT TWO O'CLOCK! ALL BATTERIES-- FIRE!
ROCKET POWERED MISSILES-- COMING RIGHT AT ME! IF THEY EXPLODE, THE CONCUSSION WILL BLOW OUT MY FLAME! I'VE GOT TO DODGE 'EM!
I DID IT! BUT THEY'RE TURNING BACK TOWARDS ME! THEY MUST BE INSTRUMENTED TO ZERO IN ON MY BODY HEAT!
ONLY ONE THING TO DO! I'VE GOT TO HEAD FOR THOSE PEAKS YONDER-- AND PRAY THAT I CAN REACH THEM BEFORE THE ROCKETS REACH ME!

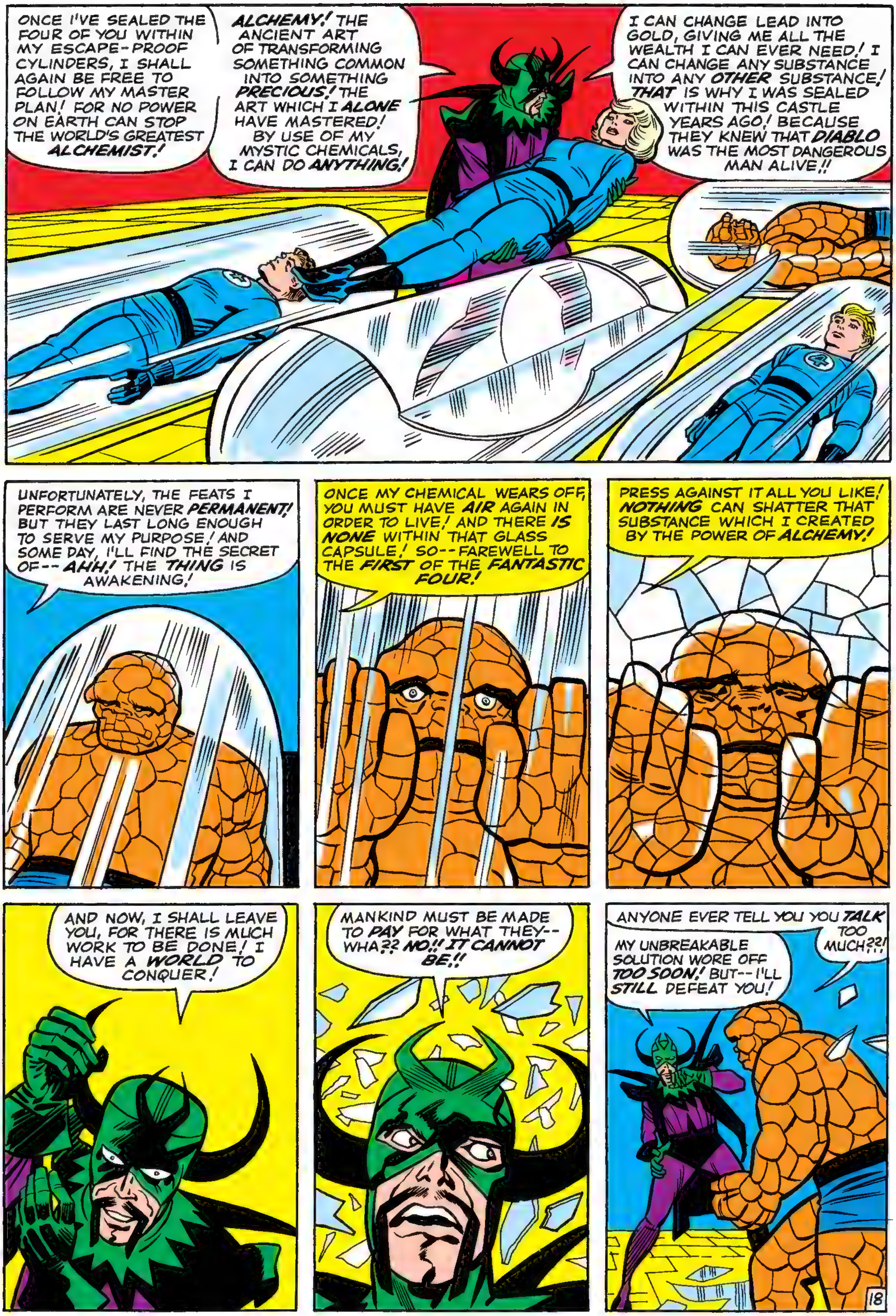

—WHEW!— JUST MADE IT! BY BURNING MY WAY THRU THE PEAK, I SHIELDED MYSELF FROM THE CONCUSSION CAUSED BY THE IMPACT!
HAH! THE FLAMING YOUNG FOOL FEELS VICTORIOUS! HE DOESN'T SUSPECT THAT MY MAIN WEAPONS ARE STILL AWAITING HIM!
HERE HE COMES! STEADY! HE'LL FLY RIGHT INTO MY IRRESISTIBLE STUN SHOWER!
I GOT HERE JUST IN TIME! NOW, IT'LL JUST TAKE ONE CAREFUL LEAP--!
FIRE!!
YOU CLUMSY DOLT! I'LL HAVE YOUR HIDE FOR THIS!!
SORRY TO GET YOU IN TROUBLE WITH YOUR BOSS, SOLDIER! BUT NOBODY'S SPRAYING MY KID BROTHER IF THE INVISIBLE GIRL CAN HELP IT!
AS THE HOSE WRIGGLES FREE UNDER THE PRESSURE OF THE CHEMICALS WHICH ARE SURGING THRU IT, ITS SPRAY HITS DIABLO'S OWN ARTILLARYMEN, INNUNDATING THEM COMPLETELY!
MY OWN MEN, PUT OUT OF ACTION BY MY STUN SHOWER CHEMICAL SPRAY!!
BUT IT IS MERELY A TEMPORARY SETBACK! DIABLO IS POWERFUL ENOUGH TO DEFEAT THE WORLD ALONE IF NEED BE!

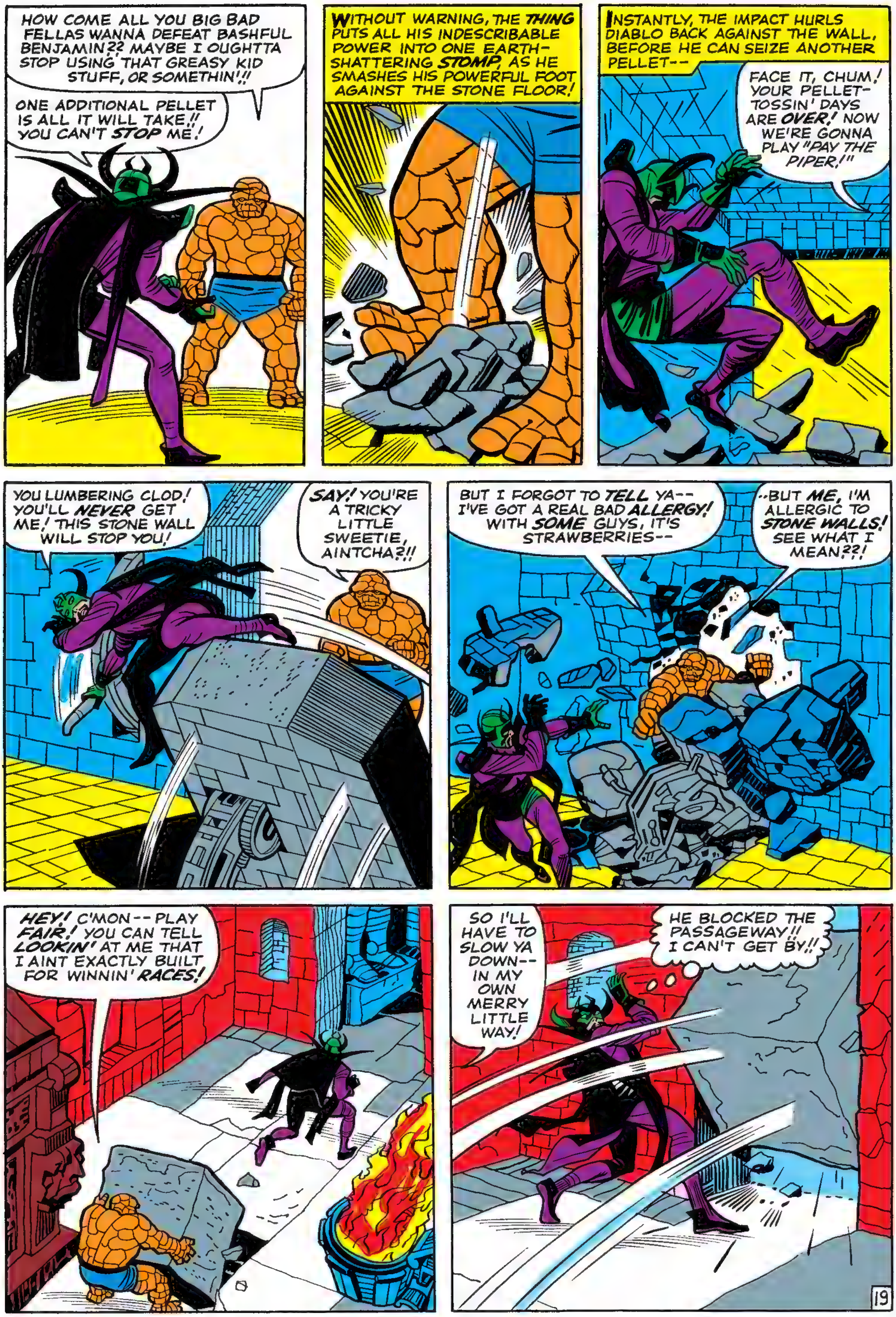

WHAT MADNESS IS THIS?? NOW THE NOZZLE IS TURNING TOWARDS ME!!
WITH LUCK, I'LL SPRAY HIM WITH HIS OWN CHEMICAL AND PUT HIM OUT OF ACTION LONG ENOUGH FOR REED AND JOHNNY TO TAKE OVER!
WHATEVER STRANGE SORCERY IS RESPONSIBLE, DIABLO STILL HAS ENOUGH UNIQUE CHEMICAL PELLETS IN HIS GLOVE TO COPE WITH IT!
TOO MANY LONG YEARS HAVE I WAITED FOR THIS MOMENT! I SHALL NOT BE STOPPED NOW!
DIABLO IS THE GREATEST ALCHEMIST OF ALL TIME! THERE IS NOTHING I CANNOT ACCOMPLISH!
AND, BEFORE THE INVISIBLE GIRL CAN LEARN HOW THE CHEMICAL SPRAY HOSE OPERATES...
OHH!
HE MANAGED TO ROT THE ENTIRE HOSE-- WITH JUST ONE PELLET-- IN ORDER TO PROTECT HIMSELF!
I HEARD A FEMALE VOICE CRY OUT A SECOND AGO! IT CAN ONLY MEAN THERE IS AN INVISIBLE FEMALE HERE!
YOU'VE LEARNED THAT TOO LATE, DIABLO! FOR I SHALL NOW TURN YOU INVISIBLE--*
*ONE OF SUE STORM'S FANTASTIC POWERS IS THE ABILITY TO MAKE ANOTHER BEING INVISIBLE WHILE SHE HERSELF REGAINS VISIBILITY! --EDITOR.
JUST IN TIME! I HEARD DIABLO'S REINFORCEMENTS RUSHING UP! IF THEY CAN'T SEE HIM, HE CAN'T COMMAND THEM!
STOP, YOU FOOLS!! YOU'LL TRAMPLE ME!
A VOICE FROM NOWHERE! RUN! RUN!!

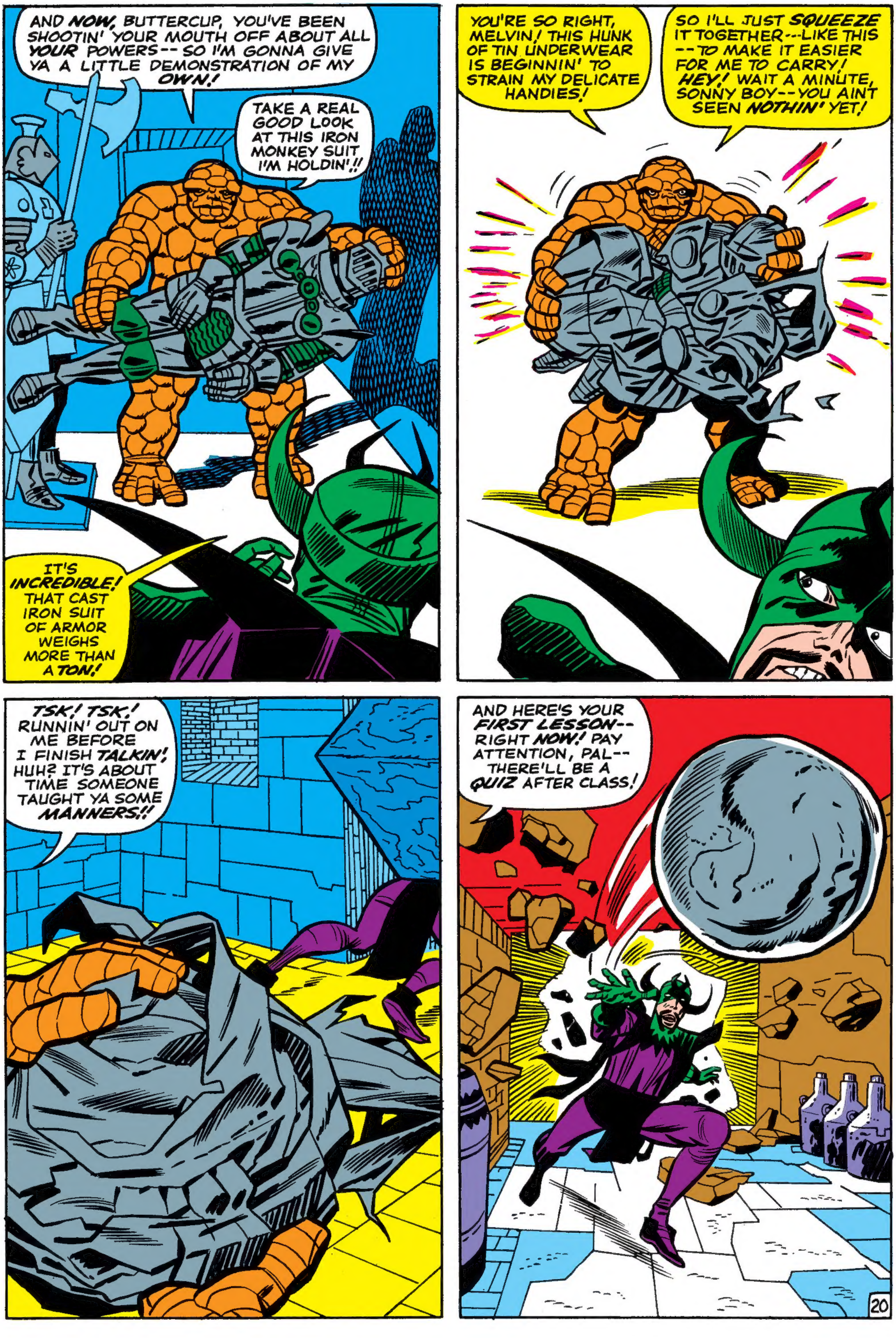

I'LL TOSS FIREBALLS PAST THE TROOPS TO KEEP THEM ON THE RUN TILL WE CAN FIGURE OUT A BATTLE PLAN!
NO ONE CAN **SEE** ME! I MIGHT BE TRAMPLED--OR **WORSE!** I'VE GOT TO FLEE TO SAFETY!
THAT'S ***IT,*** BOYS! HEAD FOR COVER! AND DON'T SHOW YOURSELVES AGAIN, UNLESS YOU WANT MORE OF THE SAME!
I'LL FOLLOW MY TROOPS INTO THE CASTLE DUNGEONS! IT WILL GIVE ME TIME TO PLAN A **COUNTER-ATTACK!**
GOOD WORK, JOHNNY! I'M OVER **HERE**--INSIDE AN INVISIBLE FORCE SCREEN! I ENCLOSED MYSELF IN IT TO AVOID THE RUSHING TROOPS!
HUH? OH, **NOW** I CAN FEEL THE SCREEN! ARE YOU OKAY, SIS?
SURE, LITTLE BROTHER!! BUT WE'VE GOT TO FIND **REED!**
MINUTES LATER, THE FABULOUS DUO ENTER THE CASTLE DUNGEONS--NOT KNOWING WHAT NEW DANGERS MAY BE LURKING THERE!
STAY BEHIND ME, SIS, WHILE I POKE AROUND DOWN HERE!
JOHNNY! WHAT'S **THAT??** OVER **THERE!!**
SOMETHING DESCENDING THRU A CRACK IN THE CEILING! IT LOOKS LIKE--!
IT **IS!** IT **MUST** BE! WE'VE **FOUND** HIM!
HI, LITTLE PARTNERS! HOPE I DIDN'T STARTLE YOU! I'VE GOT GOOD NEWS--I'VE LOCATED **BEN!**
GREAT! THEN WHAT ARE WE **WAITIN'** FOR???

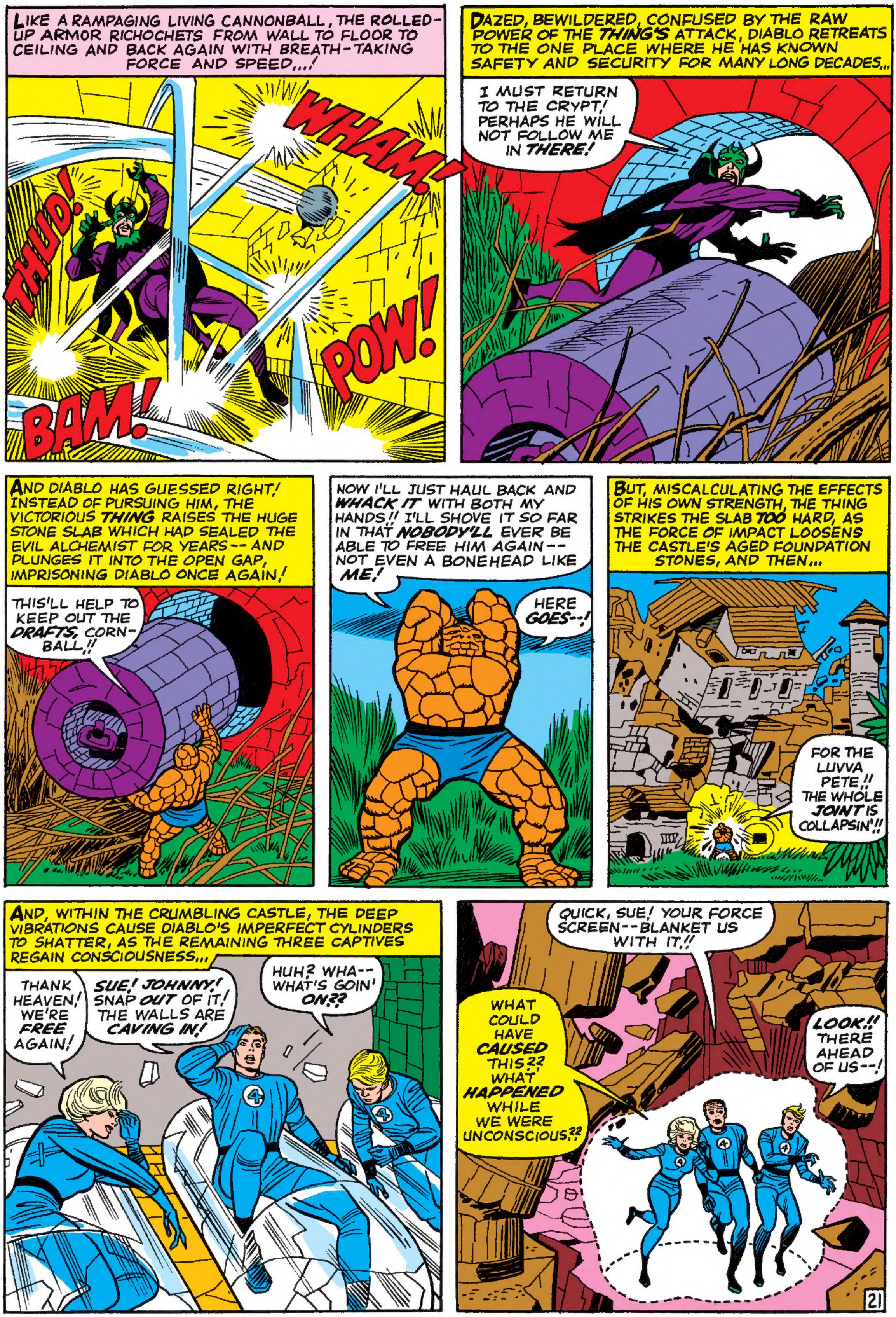

HE'S IN A CHAMBER IN THE UPPER SECTION OF THE DUNGEONS--STRAIGHT AHEAD!
THIS DIABLO CHARACTER REALLY HAS IT MADE! HE'S LIVIN' IN A SPLIT-LEVEL CASTLE!!
IF ONLY DIABLO DIDN'T HAVE SO MANY STRANGE POWERS!
THERE HE IS! NOTICE ANYTHING DIFFERENT ABOUT HIM??
OF COURSE! HE'S CHANGED BACK TO HIMSELF AGAIN!! HE'S THE THING ONCE MORE!
Y'KNOW SOMETHIN'? I'VE GOTTEN SO USED TO HIM BY NOW, THAT THE BIG LUNK ALMOST LOOKS HANDSOME TO ME!
HOLY SMOKE! I CAN'T BURN THRU THAT GLASS CAPSULE!! IS--IS HE STILL ALIVE??
HE'S ALIVE, JOHNNY! BUT HE MIGHT AS WELL NOT BE--UNLESS WE CAN FREE HIM!
OKAY, REED! YOU AND SUSIE STAND BACK--I'M GONNA INTENSIFY MY FLAME AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE! HERE GOES--!
REED, DO YOU THINK THAT--
HOLD IT, HONEY! DON'T TALK! DON'T DISTURB JOHNNY! HE HAS TO FIGURE HIS FLAME EXACTLY, SO THAT IT WON'T TOUCH BEN IN CASE THE CAPSULE SHATTERS!!
IT'S NO USE! THAT GLASS CAGE IS JUST TOO STRONG! AND I DON'T DARE MAKE MY FLAME ANY HOTTER--IT MIGHT BE THE END OF BEN!
AT THAT MOMENT, HAVING BECOME VISIBLE AGAIN DUE TO THE FACT THAT SUE STOPPED CONCENTRATING ON HIM, DIABLO APPEARS!
YOU ARE WASTING YOUR TIME! IT WILL SOON BE THE END OF ALL OF YOU!
DIABLO!!

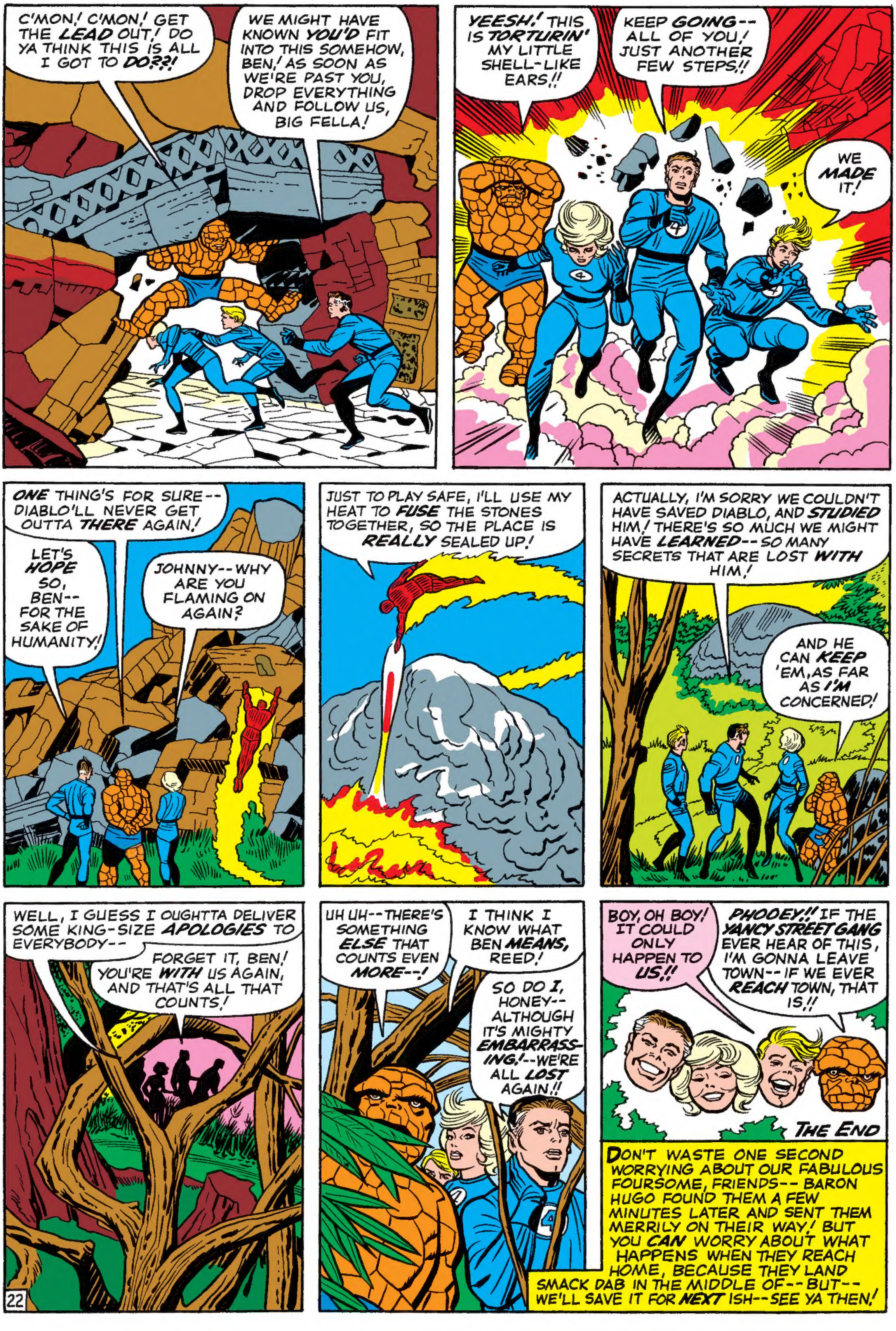

I SHALL NOT MAKE THE MISTAKE OF TOYING WITH YOU UNTIL YOU FIND A WAY TO ESCAPE ME! I SHALL DISPOSE OF YOU **IMMEDIATELY**, AS I HAVE DONE WITH YOUR GROTESQUE PARTNER--!
HAH! YOU ARE **TOO LATE!** MY PELLET HAS BEEN THROWN! YOU ARE **FINISHED!**
WE **STILL** HAVE A CHANCE!! SUE--!
I **KNOW**, REED! I'M ALL **SET** FOR HIM! **HERE!**
YOUR INVISIBLE **FORCE FIELD! GREAT!**
UH OH--MY **FLAME'S** GOING OUT! BUT THAT WON'T STOP US **NOW!**
WE MUSTN'T GIVE HIM TIME TO TOSS ANOTHER PELLET! LET'S **GET HIM**, JOHNNY!
BAH! I **SNEER** AT YOUR CLUMSY ATTACK!
WAIT, KID--!! I JUST **THOUGHT** OF SOMETHING!! HE--OHHH--TOO LATE--!
REED! WHAT'S **HAPPENING--??**
I WAS **PREPARED** FOR YOUR ATTACK! MY OWN **GARMENTS** WERE SATURATED WITH MY SPECIAL CHEMICAL! SO I'VE DISPOSED OF YOU EXACTLY AS PLANNED!
NO! YOU **CAN'T!!** I WON'T **LET** YOU!! OHHH--
FOOL! IN YOUR ANXIETY, YOU DROPPED YOUR FORCE FIELD! NOW YOU **TOO** HAVE EXPOSED YOURSELF!


ONCE I'VE SEALED THE FOUR OF YOU WITHIN MY ESCAPE-PROOF CYLINDERS, I SHALL AGAIN BE FREE TO FOLLOW MY MASTER PLAN! FOR NO POWER ON EARTH CAN STOP THE WORLD'S GREATEST ALCHEMIST!
ALCHEMY! THE ANCIENT ART OF TRANSFORMING SOMETHING COMMON INTO SOMETHING PRECIOUS! THE ART WHICH I ALONE HAVE MASTERED! BY USE OF MY MYSTIC CHEMICALS, I CAN DO ANYTHING!
I CAN CHANGE LEAD INTO GOLD, GIVING ME ALL THE WEALTH I CAN EVER NEED! I CAN CHANGE ANY SUBSTANCE INTO ANY OTHER SUBSTANCE! THAT IS WHY I WAS SEALED WITHIN THIS CASTLE YEARS AGO! BECAUSE THEY KNEW THAT DIABLO WAS THE MOST DANGEROUS MAN ALIVE!!
UNFORTUNATELY, THE FEATS I PERFORM ARE NEVER PERMANENT! BUT THEY LAST LONG ENOUGH TO SERVE MY PURPOSE! AND SOME DAY, I'LL FIND THE SECRET OF-- AHH! THE THING IS AWAKENING!
ONCE MY CHEMICAL WEARS OFF, YOU MUST HAVE AIR AGAIN IN ORDER TO LIVE! AND THERE IS NONE WITHIN THAT GLASS CAPSULE! SO--FAREWELL TO THE FIRST OF THE FANTASTIC FOUR!
PRESS AGAINST IT ALL YOU LIKE! NOTHING CAN SHATTER THAT SUBSTANCE WHICH I CREATED BY THE POWER OF ALCHEMY!
AND NOW, I SHALL LEAVE YOU, FOR THERE IS MUCH WORK TO BE DONE! I HAVE A WORLD TO CONQUER!
MANKIND MUST BE MADE TO PAY FOR WHAT THEY-- WHA?? NO!! IT CANNOT BE!!
ANYONE EVER TELL YOU YOU TALK TOO MUCH??!
MY UNBREAKABLE SOLUTION WORE OFF TOO SOON! BUT--I'LL STILL DEFEAT YOU!


HOW COME ALL YOU BIG BAD FELLAS WANNA DEFEAT BASHFUL BENJAMIN?? MAYBE I OUGHTTA STOP USING THAT GREASY KID STUFF, OR SOMETHIN'!!
ONE ADDITIONAL PELLET IS ALL IT WILL TAKE!! YOU CAN'T **STOP** ME!
WITHOUT WARNING, THE ***THING*** PUTS ALL HIS INDESCRIBABLE POWER INTO ONE EARTH-SHATTERING ***STOMP,*** AS HE SMASHES HIS POWERFUL FOOT AGAINST THE STONE FLOOR!
INSTANTLY, THE IMPACT HURLS DIABLO BACK AGAINST THE WALL, BEFORE HE CAN SEIZE ANOTHER PELLET--
FACE IT, CHUM! YOUR PELLET-TOSSIN' DAYS ARE ***OVER!*** NOW WE'RE GONNA PLAY *"PAY THE PIPER!"*
YOU LUMBERING CLOD! YOU'LL ***NEVER*** GET ME! THIS STONE WALL WILL STOP YOU!
SAY! YOU'RE A TRICKY LITTLE SWEETIE, AINTCHA?!!
BUT I FORGOT TO ***TELL*** YA-- I'VE GOT A REAL BAD ***ALLERGY!*** WITH ***SOME*** GUYS, IT'S STRAWBERRIES--
..BUT ***ME,*** I'M ALLERGIC TO ***STONE WALLS!*** SEE WHAT I MEAN??!
HEY! C'MON -- PLAY ***FAIR!*** YOU CAN TELL ***LOOKIN'*** AT ME THAT I AINT EXACTLY BUILT FOR WINNIN' ***RACES!***
SO I'LL HAVE TO SLOW YA DOWN-- IN MY OWN MERRY LITTLE WAY!
HE BLOCKED THE PASSAGEWAY!! I CAN'T GET BY!!


AND *NOW*, BUTTERCUP, YOU'VE BEEN SHOOTIN' YOUR MOUTH OFF ABOUT ALL *YOUR* POWERS-- SO I'M GONNA GIVE YA A LITTLE DEMONSTRATION OF MY *OWN!*
TAKE A REAL GOOD LOOK AT THIS IRON MONKEY SUIT I'M HOLDIN'!!
IT'S *INCREDIBLE!* THAT CAST IRON SUIT OF ARMOR WEIGHS MORE THAN A *TON!*
YOU'RE SO RIGHT, MELVIN! THIS HUNK OF TIN UNDERWEAR IS BEGINNIN' TO STRAIN MY DELICATE HANDIES!
SO I'LL JUST *SQUEEZE* IT TOGETHER--LIKE THIS --TO MAKE IT EASIER FOR ME TO CARRY! *HEY!* WAIT A MINUTE, SONNY BOY--YOU AIN'T SEEN *NOTHIN'* YET!
TSK! TSK! RUNNIN' OUT ON ME BEFORE I FINISH *TALKIN'*, HUH? IT'S ABOUT TIME SOMEONE TAUGHT YA SOME *MANNERS!!*
AND HERE'S YOUR *FIRST LESSON*-- RIGHT *NOW!* PAY ATTENTION, PAL-- THERE'LL BE A *QUIZ* AFTER CLASS!


LIKE A RAMPAGING LIVING CANNONBALL, THE ROLLED-UP ARMOR RICHOCHETS FROM WALL TO FLOOR TO CEILING AND BACK AGAIN WITH BREATH-TAKING FORCE AND SPEED...!
WHAM!
THUD!
POW!
BAM!
DAZED, BEWILDERED, CONFUSED BY THE RAW POWER OF THE *THING'S* ATTACK, DIABLO RETREATS TO THE ONE PLACE WHERE HE HAS KNOWN SAFETY AND SECURITY FOR MANY LONG DECADES...
I MUST RETURN TO THE CRYPT! PERHAPS HE WILL NOT FOLLOW ME IN *THERE!*
AND DIABLO HAS GUESSED RIGHT! INSTEAD OF PURSUING HIM, THE VICTORIOUS *THING* RAISES THE HUGE STONE SLAB WHICH HAD SEALED THE EVIL ALCHEMIST FOR YEARS-- AND PLUNGES IT INTO THE OPEN GAP, IMPRISONING DIABLO ONCE AGAIN!
THIS'LL HELP TO KEEP OUT THE *DRAFTS,* CORNBALL!!
NOW I'LL JUST HAUL BACK AND *WHACK IT* WITH BOTH MY HANDS!! I'LL SHOVE IT SO FAR IN THAT *NOBODY'LL* EVER BE ABLE TO FREE HIM AGAIN-- NOT EVEN A BONEHEAD LIKE *ME!*
HERE *GOES--!*
BUT, MISCALCULATING THE EFFECTS OF HIS OWN STRENGTH, THE THING STRIKES THE SLAB *TOO* HARD, AS THE FORCE OF IMPACT LOOSENS THE CASTLE'S AGED FOUNDATION STONES, AND THEN...
FOR THE LUVVA PETE!! THE WHOLE *JOINT* IS COLLAPSIN'!!
AND, WITHIN THE CRUMBLING CASTLE, THE DEEP VIBRATIONS CAUSE DIABLO'S IMPERFECT CYLINDERS TO SHATTER, AS THE REMAINING THREE CAPTIVES REGAIN CONSCIOUSNESS...
THANK HEAVEN! WE'RE *FREE* AGAIN!
SUE! JOHNNY! SNAP *OUT* OF IT! THE WALLS ARE *CAVING IN!*
HUH? WHA-- WHAT'S GOIN' *ON??*
QUICK, SUE! YOUR FORCE SCREEN--BLANKET US WITH IT!!
WHAT COULD HAVE *CAUSED* THIS?? WHAT *HAPPENED* WHILE WE WERE UNCONSCIOUS??
LOOK!! THERE AHEAD OF US--!


C'MON! C'MON! GET THE LEAD OUT! DO YA THINK THIS IS ALL I GOT TO DO??!
WE MIGHT HAVE KNOWN YOU'D FIT INTO THIS SOMEHOW, BEN! AS SOON AS WE'RE PAST YOU, DROP EVERYTHING AND FOLLOW US, BIG FELLA!
YEESH! THIS IS TORTURIN' MY LITTLE SHELL-LIKE EARS!!
KEEP GOING-- ALL OF YOU! JUST ANOTHER FEW STEPS!!
WE MADE IT!
ONE THING'S FOR SURE-- DIABLO'LL NEVER GET OUTTA THERE AGAIN!
LET'S HOPE SO, BEN-- FOR THE SAKE OF HUMANITY!
JOHNNY--WHY ARE YOU FLAMING ON AGAIN?
JUST TO PLAY SAFE, I'LL USE MY HEAT TO FUSE THE STONES TOGETHER, SO THE PLACE IS REALLY SEALED UP!
ACTUALLY, I'M SORRY WE COULDN'T HAVE SAVED DIABLO, AND STUDIED HIM! THERE'S SO MUCH WE MIGHT HAVE LEARNED-- SO MANY SECRETS THAT ARE LOST WITH HIM!
AND HE CAN KEEP 'EM, AS FAR AS I'M CONCERNED!
WELL, I GUESS I OUGHTTA DELIVER SOME KING-SIZE APOLOGIES TO EVERYBODY--
FORGET IT, BEN! YOU'RE WITH US AGAIN, AND THAT'S ALL THAT COUNTS!
UH UH--THERE'S SOMETHING ELSE THAT COUNTS EVEN MORE--!
I THINK I KNOW WHAT BEN MEANS, REED!
SO DO I, HONEY-- ALTHOUGH IT'S MIGHTY EMBARRASSING!--WE'RE ALL LOST AGAIN!!
BOY, OH BOY! IT COULD ONLY HAPPEN TO US!!
PHOOEY!! IF THE YANCY STREET GANG EVER HEAR OF THIS, I'M GONNA LEAVE TOWN-- IF WE EVER REACH TOWN, THAT IS!!
THE END
DON'T WASTE ONE SECOND WORRYING ABOUT OUR FABULOUS FOURSOME, FRIENDS-- BARON HUGO FOUND THEM A FEW MINUTES LATER AND SENT THEM MERRILY ON THEIR WAY! BUT YOU CAN WORRY ABOUT WHAT HAPPENS WHEN THEY REACH HOME, BECAUSE THEY LAND SMACK DAB IN THE MIDDLE OF-- BUT-- WE'LL SAVE IT FOR NEXT ISH--SEE YA THEN!

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